University of Alberta

Social Capital, Political Parties and Democracy

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Political Sciences

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2007

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395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-29897-8
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-29897-8

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Abstract

Without a doubt, social capital has become one of the most debated topics in current social sciences, proving to be a useful tool for the different disciplines in their study of societal processes. Indeed, looking at the field of political sciences, there is a prolific literature with regards to social capital and concepts of democracy and political participation. Despite this fact, in reality there are few works that study the connection between the concept of social capital and institutions such as political parties, which are also important ingredients for the political development of society. This thesis discusses how the concept of social capital is applicable to the study of political parties and its functions, helping to distinguish the potentialities and drawbacks of these institutions as well as how environmental conditions may influence these institutions' capabilities to produce useful outcomes for political progress and social development.

Dedicatory

To my mother: thank you for your incredible strength and generosity, and most of all, thank you for being my role-model

To my father: thank you for being such a wonderful father and taking care of me even when I am so far away from you

To my brother and cousins: thank you for your unconditional love, you all are the reason why I am here

To my supervisor, Dr. Fred Judson: thank you for believing in me, even when I did not belief myself

To Karen Croswell: thank you for teaching me everything that I know and love about Canada, including you!

To my friends: without them I would have not last this long, thank you guys!

To God: thank you for all your gifts and for giving me the happiness to write this today!

Social Capital, Political Parties and Democracy

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter One: the concept of social capital 7

1.1. Putnam's collectivist view 8
1.2. Coleman's utilitarian view 17
1.3. Bourdieu's elitist view 26
1.4. Putnam, Coleman, Bourdieu and the idea of social capital 34

Chapter Two: democracy, political parties and the social capital debate 39

2.1. Democracy Revised: Dahl, Lipset and Lakin 40
2.2. Political Parties: concept and functions 46
2.3. Democracy, Political Parties and Social Capital 56
2.3.1. Robert Putnam: Bowling Alone
Decline of Social Engagement 56
2.3.2. Eric Uslaner: Political Parties and Social Capital, Political Parties or Social Capital- Missing Connection 61

Chapter Three: the connection between political parties, social capital and democracy 68

3.1. Robert Putnam: Networks, Norms and Trust 69
3.1.1. Coordination of collective action 70
3.1.2. Norms and procedures for political action 71
3.1.2.1 Interest aggregation and articulation 72
3.1.2.2. Recruitment of Political Leadership 74
3.1.3. Trust and Cooperation 75

3.2. James Coleman: Relational Resources 79
3.2.1. Obligations and Expectations 80
3.2.2. Information Potential 83
3.2.3. Authority Relations 85
3.2.4. Norms and Effective Actions 89
3.2.4.1. Party Norms 90
3.2.4.2. Constitutions 91
3.2.4.3. Electoral Laws 92
3.2.5. Appropriable Social Organizations 93

3.3. Pierre Bourdieu: Elite and Inequality 98
3.3.1. Governing Elite and Democracy: the need for organization 101
3.3.1.1. The elite as an Organizing Body 101

3.3.1.2. Democratic Elites and the Need for Controls 103
3.3.2. Political Parties as Sources of Leadership: Configuration of the Governing Elite 105
3.3.2.1. Nomination Process 106
3.3.2.2. Social and Legal Factors 107
3.3.2.3. Governing Elite Configuration: Circulation of the Elite 109
3.3.3. Parties, Patronage and Social Change: the dark side of social capital 110
3.3.3.1. Cadre Party: Old Clientelism and Notable Elites 111
3.3.3.2. Mass Party: Party Elite and New Clientelism 112
3.3.3.3. The Catch-All Party: Clientele Diversification and Pragmatic Politics 113
3.3.3.4. The Cartel Party: State Patronage 116
3.3.3.5. Party Patronage, Democracy and Social Capital (Dahl's Continuum) 119
3.4. Political Parties, Social Capital and Democracy 122

Conclusions 125

Bibliography 137

Tables
Figure 1 Patronage System in the Democratic Continuum 120

Introduction

Reviewing current works on democracy and development studies, one cannot help but notice how often the expression "social capital" appears in the literature. This originally sociological concept is causing quite a fascination among political scientists, who have recently discovered the concept's utility for political research. Among the political scholars that have contributed to the study of this concept are Kenneth Newton (2001), Dietlind Stolle (2002, 2003), Eric Uslaner (1999, 2004), and Michael W. Foley (1997, 2001). However, it was Robert D. Putnam (1993), with his explanation of the role of social capital for democracy and social development in Italy and North America, who initially brought social capital into the arena of political analysis. Being one of the most renowned authors on the subject, Putnam defines social capital as "features of social organization"—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to work together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (1993, 167). Most importantly, Putnam claims that social capital created within voluntary associations can help society in its democratic advancement. He maintains that participation in voluntary networks teaches people not only the civic skills that are necessary for collective action, but also the values of respect and tolerance that are crucial for democracy (2000, 338-9). However true this may be, some associations have a greater influence on democracy and politics than others. Among those that are supposed to play a critical role in a democracy are political parties, which are considered essential elements for a democratic political system. In my research I will try to assess whether political parties can in fact produce social capital as well as whether this social capital will be useful for democracy. Through this thesis I will argue that political parties do produce different types

of social capital; however, the usefulness of this social capital for democratic purposes will ultimately depend on the institutional context in which the parties develop.

Political parties, as civil society organizations, are able to produce different social capital by-products, which are not only limited to those of generalized trust and norms of reciprocity as described by Putnam (1993, 167; 2000, 19). Looking at other social capital perspectives like those of James Coleman (1990) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977), it is possible to observe that political parties can actually produce other social capital resources. From Coleman's view, these entities can produce 'public goods' or resources that benefit not only party members but also the society in general (Coleman, 1990, 315). A good example of this is parties' role in interest representation and political participation. Moreover, parties generate norms of political behaviour (i.e., norms and sanctions, Ibid, 310), by instilling a political mindset in the citizens that participate in these organizations and their practices. Lastly, and most importantly, parties produce political leadership needed for political and social organization, i.e., authority relations,(Ibid. 310-1). On the other hand, parties can also produce other social capital by-products that may not be as useful for the public interest, such as those of exclusion and inequality, which are usually exposed in the behaviour of the political elite (Bourdieu, 1973). In the case of parties, these features are mostly exposed in processes of decision-making, where political elites may use their power to exclude other groups from participating in negotiations.

The relevance of this research is twofold: First, for all the political analysis that deals with social capital as an essential ingredient for democracy, there are not many works that discuss the role of parties in the creation of this social resource. Even when the relationship between social capital and political institutions has been studied from many

different angles[1], there is a 'void' in the democratic-social capital agenda when it comes to the study of political parties as democratic institutions. Through this research, my intention is to help fill this void by showing that these political entities play a very strategic function in the creation of social capital for democracy, as their activities are intended to assist citizens in the exercise of choosing the leaders and the ideology that will govern them. Second, this argument becomes even more important when looking at the amount of works[2] that promote social capital production at the community and civil society levels, without paying too much attention to the political context in which these communities are embedded. In this case, I will explain how political institutions and democratic conditions can exert a significant influence on the kind of social capital produced within the society.

Briefly, my thesis will have the following structure: My first chapter begins with the study of the three main perspectives or streams of social capital thought, exposed in the works of Bourdieu-Marxism, Coleman-rational choice and Putnam-communitarianism. The study of these social capital accounts helps me to lie out the framework that I will use to explore my subject of study-political parties, as well as to create my own definition. Robert Putnam (1993,2000) as one of the best-known proponents of social capital theory, becomes important to my research as his collective view allows me to see the potential of civic associations and collective social activity for economic, political, and social development. In regards to James Coleman (1990), his definition of social capital also contributes to my study as it gives a more pragmatic and tangible view of the social capital phenomenon, looking at social capital as a series of

[1] Some of the authors that have worked in this area are Robert Putnam, Kenneth Newton, Dietlind Stolle, Susan Pharr, Donatella de la Porta, Sidney Tarrow, Bob Edwards, and Michael Foley.
[2] Such as the World Bank "Community Driven Development" initiative and "poverty.net" website, whose endeavours are mostly oriented toward the empowering of local communities and poor sectors of society.

resources intentionally created by individuals in order to achieve certain ends. Finally, Pierre Bourdieu's (1973) idea of social capital is especially useful for this research as it shows a more unsocial side of social capital. His theory exposes social capital as a negative force for society, in that the groups create benefits for their members at the expense of outsiders. This analysis is complemented with the works of other important authors such as Nan Lin (2001), John Field (2003), Edwards, Foley and Diani (2001), and Kenneth Newton (2001) among others, all of who provide useful critiques and contributions to the works of these main proponents.

My second chapter is consisting of three subsections: the first two sections are intended to define democracy and political parties in order to explain the context and the subject of study. My reason to start the chapter defining the context instead of the subject is that, in my view, the institutional environment in which networks develop bears a significant influence in the kind of capital that they eventually produce. Here, I will use the works of Robert Dahl (1971), Seymour Martin Lipset and Jason M. Lakin (2004) to evaluate the concept of democracy as a political idea and as political system. For my second section, I define the idea of political parties from the viewpoints of Lipset and Lakin, E.E. Schattschneider (1977), Robert Michels (1959), and Giovanni Sartori (1976). These authors are useful as they allow me to observe parties from a functional perspective: as civic organizations, whose political functions have a significant effect on their surroundings. My last section in this chapter is dedicated to a review of Robert Putnam's (2000) and Eric Uslaner's (2004) pieces on social capital and political parties in North America, which allows me to assess current views about political parties and their relation to social capital[3].

[3] The reason for choosing Putnam and Uslaner is the fact that despite the prolific amount of works on social capital that deal with democracy, political participation and institutions (see Putnam and Pharr 2000; Sheri

With regards to social capital and political parties, Robert Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone* (2000), suggests that current party practices have produced a decline in political participation and social capital production as membership activism is now replaced with financial contributions. Conversely, Eric Uslaner (2004), in his article "Political Parties and Democracy, Political Parties or Democracy" states that North America parties cannot be considered social capital sources, since they are not interested in encouraging social interaction nor political participation. Overall, these two authors suggest that as far as current literature pertains, political parties do not or cannot produce social capital.

Finally, as a response to these arguments, my third chapter explores the connection between social capital, parties, and democracy. In this section, I study the notion of political party from each of the three social capital views that I review in my first chapter, in order to find how the parties' activity fits into these theoretical models. I believe that as far as political parties are a part of civil society and operate as civic networks, they are sources of social capital by-products. My objective through this chapter is to explain exactly how they produce these social capital resources. I use the Putnam and Coleman sections to analyze parties' function and procedures by observing how parties produce social capital that is useful for democratic purposes and conversely, how a democratic context provides the framework for parties to perform this task. Lastly, I use Bourdieu to analyze the role of party elites and their offspring--governing elites. In this section, I explain how elites constitute a social capital resource that is useful for democracy as well as the significance of institutional constraints for this democratic outcome. Subsequently, I explore how parties' processes and practices, namely nomination and patronage, can also produce negative social

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Berman 2001; Hooghe and Stolle 2003), the only pieces that I could find that deal with political parties are those of Putnam[3] and Uslaner[3]

capital that generates exclusion and reproduces inequality. For this last point, I present a brief historical review of parties' patronage system to analyze how elites have managed to preserve their patronage practices in spite of democratic advancements.

Finally, in my conclusions, I offer the results of my analysis in the different chapters, providing my own idea of social capital as well as explaining my vision about parties' role as social capital sources. This last section summarizes my ideas with regards to social capital, parties, and the value of their action for democratic purposes.

Chapter One: The Concept of Social Capital

At first glance, the term "social capital" catches the reader's attention because of its unusual composition: "social" is related to society, the relationship between people, and community; "capital", in its economic sense, is understood as an investment in future profit. Literally translated, this word ensemble means "investment in social relations for future profit" (Lin 2001, 16). This idea of social 'investment' is not new to sociologists; indeed, from Toennies (1988) to Durkheim (1933) and Granovetter (1973), sociologists have long attempted to uncover the impact of social relations on individuals and their environment. Nevertheless, the concept of social capital represents a new take on social analysis as it allows for an unfolding of the mechanics of social relations from a more pragmatic perspective, looking at these interactions as a production process that creates effects and bears consequences for society. Among those who have embraced this new perspective are Bourdieu (1977), Coleman (1982), Lin (2000), Woolcock (1998, 2001) and Putnam (1993, 2000), whose studies on the notion of social capital have contributed to the expansion of the social approach. Despite the fact that all of these studies provide useful insights in the study of the social capital concept, for this analysis I have decided to focus on the readings of Robert Putnam (1993)[1] James Coleman (1982) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977). The reason for choosing these particular readings over the others is that these specific authors' different interpretations of the idea of social capital relate directly to my research subject with regard to political parties.

In this chapter I will examine these authors' different perceptions of social capital in order to observe the commonalities among their works, as well as the differences that

[1] Although Putnam has other important pieces, such as "Bowling Alone" (2000), I decided to work with "Making democracy work" (1993) as it is in this book where he explained in careful detail the foundations for his later studies in North America.

identify them each as unique contributions to the theory. Putnam's studies of the Italian experience help us to understand the process of creation of social capital at the collective level, while Coleman's account provides a detailed description of the underlying resources of social capital. Lastly, Bourdieu's perspective on social capital allows for observing these resources as assets that are accrued and secured for the purposes of social and political leverage. The purpose of this exercise is to present the different instruments that I will use in order to study parties as both social and political entities, taking from each scholar the information that I consider useful in analysing such parties' structure and dynamics. For this comparative analysis I will also use the readings of Lin (2000), Field (1993), Newton (2001a, 2001 b) and Foley, Edwards and Diani (2001), whose critiques and perspectives on social capital complement the primary sources by allowing for a better understanding of the main authors' views.

1.1. Robert D. Putnam (1993):

Despite being one of the most recent exponents on social capital, Robert D. Putnam has already gained prestige within this field of research, most notably for his studies on the process of social capital generation at the community level. While other approaches look at groups' resources, Putnam's studies are oriented to instead observe the process by which these social resources come to life. The author illustrates this process in his study of the Italian regions (1993), where he observes the differences between the North and South in terms of development from the social capital perspective. Putnam defines social capital as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (167). In his analysis of Italy's social capital, Putnam suggests that the reasons for the dissimilar development of the two

regions examined can be somehow explained looking at the initial differences between their civic cultures. According to Putnam, Italy's North was able to further develop political and social structures thanks to strong civic traditions, which produced the social capital resources needed to undertake collective endeavours. (182-3) In a manner different to that of their Southern neighbours who were subjected to oppressive Norman rule (180), the more distant Northern cities were able to develop a system of "communal republicanism", which allowed for the autonomous management of their local resources. (Lipnack and Stamps, 2002, 3) This communal system was mainly sustained by voluntary associations such as tower societies, trade guilds and mutual aid groups, which were created with the purpose of "protection from marauding violence and cooperation for economic prosperity." (Ibid.) It was through the interactions generated by such civic associations that communities were able to build the relations of trust and norms of reciprocity required to resolve dilemmas of collective action. Putnam explains this point when he states that "individuals [who] have lived in such [a] situation for a substantial time and have developed shared norms and patterns of reciprocity [...] possess social capital with which they can build institutional arrangements for resolving CPR (Common Pool Resources) dilemmas." (169)

For Putnam, each component of social capital -trust, norms and networks- plays a key role in the creation of this social resource, as they are all interconnected to one another. The author begins his social capital analysis by explaining how trust influences social capital production. Looking specifically at the rotating credit associations that were common in the northern cities of Venice, Bologna and Milan, Putnam observes how these financial organizations relied on a reputation of trust for their economic transactions:

> A reputation of honesty and reliability is an important asset for any would-be participant. One important source of reputational information, of course, is previous participation in another credit association. [However] in many cases, members must trust in the trust of others to complete their obligations, since they know little about them [...] Rotating credit associations illustrate how dilemmas of collective action can be overcome [...] for they use pre-existing social connections between individuals to help circumvent problems of imperfect information and enforceability(168-9)

For these credit associations trust was a precious commodity, and individuals who participated fairly in them gained a reputation of trustworthiness that allowed them access to other credit associations as well. In that way, these rotating credit associations produced social capital by helping participants to interact with others and build a reputation of trust.

Despite its benign appearance, however, this trust was not the result of naïve behaviour. Indeed, these associations were very careful about choosing their members, in order to avoid harmful behaviours such as defaulting and cheating (168). This process of sharing information was facilitated by the fact that the members of these credit organizations were also members of other civic associations, such as trade guilds or community groups, which allowed individuals to interact with each other and thus learn about other people's behaviour. Moreover, individuals were also interested in participating in these civic associations since such social activities helped them to both create a trustworthy reputation and to expand their social circles. Cooperation within these organizations was founded "[...] in a very lively sense of the mutual value to the

participants of such cooperation, not on a general ethic of the unity of all men or on an organic view of society" (Coleman 1982, cited in Putnam, 168). Later, Putnam adds to this point when he states, "The trust that is required to sustain cooperation is not blind. Trust entails a prediction about the behaviour of an independent actor" (171). The ability to make such a prediction was facilitated by the regular interactions which occur within these organizations, as this allowed members to observe each other's conduct and thus acquire information about the choices that others were likely to make.

Simultaneously, social trust was also largely conditioned by the norms that regulate these civic associations. In this regard, Putnam explains that while *personal* trust develops from interactions with people that we know, *social* trust depends on norms that regulate our relations with people that we do not know. He explains that these norms[2] are needed in larger and more complex settings "as they lower transaction costs and facilitate cooperation" among strangers. (172) Norms, in this context, smooth the organization of collective action by regulating people's activities and teaching them how to work with others who may be unknown to them. Among these norms, Putnam claims that generalized reciprocity is "one [of], if not the most important" for the generation of social capital: "Generalized reciprocity refers to a continuing relationship of exchange that is at any time unrequited or imbalanced, but that involves mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be repaid in the future" (172). A norm of generalized reciprocity helps to predict others' behaviours, since we do favours for others with the loose expectation of being repaid in the long term.[3] Nevertheless, he also admits that this norm of reciprocity is more

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[2] Which he define as civic values or virtues, like those of moderation, compromise, trust, reciprocity and tolerance.

[3] There is also the fact that if we do not return the favours, those who helped us once will take our "ingratitude" into account when considering later endeavours. People generally know that not following

likely to be reinforced within a "civic community", wherein the overlapping of social networks and frequency of interactions among citizens facilitate the spreading of useful information for making decisions about others' trustworthiness.

These social networks, which Putnam also calls "networks of civic engagement" constituted the foundation of the civic communities of northern Italy, as they promoted formation of the social capital needed to foster economic and social development in the form of civic virtues. Networks of civic engagement, like rotating credit associations, church chorales and community groups produced social capital while at the same time teaching people civic values, such as reciprocity and cooperation (173). As people participated in these civic groups, they learned how to work cooperatively with each other, and how to reciprocate actions and favours received from others. This learning helped to develop a sense of group solidarity and community that made it easier for individuals to trust one another in general. This social trust emerged from each individual's conviction in knowing that others would comply with their word, on the grounds that the others knew that failing to do so would be harmful to their own interests in the long run. (173). In his section on norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement, Putnam resumes this argument in describing how these civic networks 'bring the pieces together' to create social capital:

> Networks of civic engagement foster robust norms of reciprocity. Compatriots who interact in many social contexts are apt to develop strong norms of acceptable behaviour and to convey their mutual expectations to one another in many reinforcing encounters. These norms are reinforced by the network of relationships

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these norms of reciprocity will be harmful to their future projects, as it may socially exclude them via ostracism, and also exclude them from others' resources.

that depend on the establishment of a reputation of keeping promises and accepting the norms of the local community regarding behaviour. (173)

Thus, civic associations are the final terms in the social capital equation, as it is through these networks that individuals come together and learn the civic values of reciprocity and cooperation that are needed to work as a collective force. It is also through these networks that social trust is created, since people working together under norms of civility and solidarity are likely to be more confident in the reliability of each other's behaviour.

Another important point made by Putnam is his claim that networks of civic engagement were the key ingredients for democracy and the institutional success of the northern regions, as such networks made up the civic context in which the region's political institutions evolved. Civic networks influenced institutional performance and political outcomes not only by inculcating values of cooperation, reciprocity and trust, but also by teaching important civic skills - such as negotiation and compromise - needed for political participation (176). These organizations helped to create a general feeling of solidarity and public spirit, as well as a sense of shared responsibility and "self-interest properly understood[4]"; the latter encouraged people to get involved in the solving of public issues (87-89). It was thus that these civic networks created the conditions needed for the growth of democratic civic community, wherein individuals actively participate in public matters and work with common purpose, each acknowledging the prevalence of the public good above their personal interests. (87-88).

[4] Putnam uses this concept from Tocqueville, to explain the need or duty of the citizens to frame their personal interest within the framework of public welfare: "Self-interest defined in the context of broader public needs" (1993, 88).

At this point is important to state that although Putnam considers civic association a key ingredient of democracy, he also clarifies that there are different kinds of networks whose dynamics may either help or hinder the processes of creating social capital for democratic purposes. Horizontal networks, such as those created in voluntary associations (e.g. bowling leagues and choral societies), are more likely to produce cooperation and trust as they allow their participants to interact in conditions of equality and to exchange information in a free manner. In the case of vertical networks like those of patronage (e.g. the mafia or the Catholic Church), where agents are linked "in relations of hierarchy and dependence" (173), the creation of trust is hindered by the fact that cooperation is often considered a risk. In this situation, individuals withhold information in order to protect themselves against exploitation and opportunism by others (175). Putnam further refines the definition of horizontal networks in distinguishing between "bonding" and "bridging" social capital (2000, 22; 1993, 175). Bonding social capital refers to homogeneous networks; like those that emerge from our personally familiar circles, while bridging social capital describes those networks that link us to people who are outside of our intimate groups. Although each kind of network benefits society[5], Putnam ultimately claims that bridging networks are more useful for advancing democracy as they encourage crosscutting linkages among society, thus promoting the tolerance, cooperation, and diffusion of information that is essential for social trust to occur (2000,22; 1993, 175).

Putnam's account of the Italian experience is helpful in observing how social capital is produced at the collective level. Networks of civic engagement allow for individuals to establish regular exchanges that involve communication and cooperation for common

[5] Bonding networks help to reinforce group identity and strengthen social cohesion, whereas bridging networks are useful in inculcating tolerance, disseminating information, and allowing access to external resources (2000,22).

purposes. In order to organize these forces and resolve dilemmas of collective action, these institutions also create norms that regulate members' behaviour and explain how things are to be done in order to obtain the desired outcome. These norms also infuse people with a sense of reciprocity and group solidarity, which encourages them to collaborate with and do things for each other based on the certainty that these actions will eventually help all involved to attain common goals. Finally, as people have the opportunity to work with each other on repeated occasions, they are able to observe others' conduct and choices, which ultimately facilitates the process of building social trust. If their experiences are positive and everybody involved follows the norms as expected, members will be more likely to develop confidence in those who are part of the organization, as they are able to predict possible outcomes of their actions. Putnam observes that for this trust to become social (i.e. to spread throughout society), societies first must develop dense networks of social exchange, specifically of social interconnectedness between associations. As these civic networks become more deeply interconnected, to the point of overlap with each other, it is more likely for trust to spread among the related citizens since repeated interactions help people to establish relations of acquaintance and to discourage defaulting. Also importantly, these networks must be of a horizontal-bridging kind (e.g. voluntary associations) in order to best promote equality in participation and to facilitate the transmission of information. In conclusion, Putnam asserts that the existence of these civic associations, together with the norms of reciprocity and trust that emerge from them, allow for democracy to evolve as they inculcate members with a sense of civic duty and respect for the public good.

That being said, it is now relevant to present some contentions with and critiques of this theory. One of the most criticized aspects of Putnam's work is that his analyses tend to

rely heavily on sociological grounds, without paying proper attention to the political factors that are involved in social capital generation. In this regard, Tarrow (1996) and Levi (1996) point out that Putnam's bottom-up approach to social capital fails to recognize the importance of the state and the influence that regulatory policies have on civil society's organization and activities. Whittington (2001) also agrees with these observations and argues that Putnam's Neo-Tocquevillian account fails to assess the impact of political institutions and processes on social capital, especially when related directly to democracy and political stability. Whittington states: "A well-functioning democracy depends not only on social relations but also on political institutions and constitutional order that structures the relationship between them." (22) There are also those who consider Putnam's a romanticized view of social capital (Field 2003, Newton 2001b, Foley and Edwards 2001), which manages to ignore the exclusionist and elitist effects that this resource accumulation may generate. Although Putnam does acknowledge this point in his later book *Bowling Alone* (2000), in which he explains "the dark side of social capital", even then he does not recognize these negative characteristics as embedded in the process of social capital's creation. He instead attributes them to certain groups (mostly those of bonding capital), whose lack of external links leads them to pursue their interests at the expense of those in the rest of society. Furthermore, there are authors such as Kenneth Newton (2001a) who contest the very relationship between voluntary associations and social trust. Newton claims that at the societal level, institutions such as family, school, job sites and neighbourhoods are more effective in producing trusting behaviour than voluntary civic associations, since people spend more time in these institutions than they do in voluntary groups (2001, 229).

From the perspective of understanding the process of creating social capital, I consider the most important critics to be those who argue against Putnam's definition of the concept of social capital itself. Putnam presents networks, together with norms of reciprocity and trust, as equal components of social capital. The problem with this conceptualization is that as networks are given the same weight as norms and trust, this begs the question as to what came first: the network, the norms or the trust. In this particular definition of social capital, Putnam fails to differentiate which elements are precursors to or results of social capital, making the concept unclear and somewhat circular[6] (Lin 2001, 211; Field 2003, 38; Mizstal 2000, 121). It is at this point that Coleman's (1990) explanation of social capital becomes useful, as it allows us to discern between sources and outcomes. This separation is not totally clear, however, as his analysis does not focus on the process of creation of social capital, but instead on its utility or value for the individual.

1.2. James Coleman (1990):

Coleman's concept of social capital reflects the rational choice perspective, in which individuals look at social relationships as means to an end. The author introduces this concept in explaining the origin of social relations:

> Social interdependence [...] arises from the fact that actors have interests in events that are fully or partially under the control of others actors. The result of the various kinds of exchanges [...] that actors engage in to achieve their interests is [...] the formation of social relations having some persistence over time. [Some of these

[6] Putnam later corrects this imprecision, defining social capital in his book *Bowling Alone* as social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (2000, 19).

> relations are] authority relations, relations of trust and consensual allocation of rights [,] which establish norms (300).

Coleman thus conceives social relations as the result of attempts by individuals to direct the actions of others, so that the actions will favour their own interests. Such social relations may bear relations of authority, trust, or social norms, but whatever their kind, they all help people to obtain the tools needed to attain their objectives.

For Coleman, these different social relations make up the social structure or system in which individuals interact with each other through different kinds of exchanges[7] with the intent of gaining control over resources in which they are interested (29). For Coleman, the term 'social structure' applies to any social unit that involves interaction between two or more people, ranging from the 'couple' as a family unit, to associations and greater communities. These social units provide social capital resources for the individuals comprising them, as social interactions create useful elements that help people to achieve desired goals (300). Coleman describes this idea in his definition of social capital:

> I will conceive of these social-structural resources as capital asset for the individual that is as social capital. Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure (302).

[7] Coleman explains that these social exchanges or transactions include "not only what is normally thought as a transaction [exchange or bartering], but also a variety of other actions which [...] include bribes, threats, promises and resources investments" (29).

According to this definition, social capital refers to all of the relational characteristics or elements that characterise a social unit, which can serve individuals in the pursuit of their objectives. For Coleman, these social resources (i.e. social capital) are created through the different social relations' dynamics (normative, authority-based, trust-based). Finally, he claims that social capital "cannot be defined by a single entity, but a variety of entities", because in his view social capital is represented by not one, but by any aspect or element of a relationship that can be used by the individuals to achieve their goals.

Coleman starts with the idea that "social capital is embodied in the relations among persons" (304). Understanding that these social relations are at the heart of any social structure (300, 43), it follows that these structures constitute sources of social capital.[8] The examples that he offers to illustrate unique types of social capital - study circles in South Korea, neighbourhoods in Jerusalem, and markets in Cairo (303) - although differing in circumstance, are similar in that all of these activities occur within social structures. In these cases, the social relations that individuals establish within these social structures (the study group's authority-based relations, the market's trust-based, and the neighbourhood's normative relationships[9]) facilitate the actions of people towards achieving their goals. These relationships make possible organization for political protests, monitoring and improvement of local security within the neighbourhoods, and expedition and efficiency of economic transaction for merchants in the market. These social units thus constitute a source of social capital since they allow people to maintain contact with others, and hence

[8] The author also considers social organizations as a social capital resource, as they make possible "the achievement of goals that could not be achieved in its absence, or could be achieved only at a higher cost." (304)

[9] Here, I consider normative relationships, those that are ruled by a set of norms or rules

create the social resources that they will later use to achieve their goals, whether of political expression, improvement of living conditions, or expansion of economic wealth.

Coleman's account shows, albeit in an indirect manner, how networks produce social capital by promoting social relationships that act as social capital resources. His analysis, though, is more explicit when explaining how social relations can produce "useful capital resources for individuals" (306). He does so through presenting the different valuable elements present in social relations such as obligations and expectations, information potential, effective norms, and authority structure (i.e. rights of control). Coleman observes how "obligations and expectations" in a relationship constitute a social capital resource by offering participants grounds upon which to claim reciprocity. He explains that as people do things for others, these favours create an obligation to repay; it creates a sort of "credit slip" against the individual receiving the favour (306). These "credit slips" represent a banked benefit for those who did the favour, as they expect their kindness to be returned whenever needed. Thus, obligations or "credit slips" constitute social capital, as they embody an expectation of reciprocity. In that sense, as people do things for each other they build their social capital stock, accumulating "credit slips" that they will eventually "cash in" for things that are useful for their purposes. Coleman suggests that although some of these obligations may occur spontaneously within the social structure, individuals acting in a rational manner may also act purposefully to produce these "credit slips" (309). From a rational choice perspective, he explains that rational individuals will perform unrequited favours for others at times when these favours do not cost them too much for them, because they know that these favours will grant them the beneficiary's assistance when needed (310). As such, people will often help others purely

for their own self-interest, with the intent of accumulating social capital in the form of obligations so that they may increase their amount of available resources.

Even though obligations of reciprocity represent a form of social capital, these social resources require solid roots of trust for their creation. Coleman explains that in order for this kind of social capital to exist, one important prerequisite is confidence in "the level of trustworthiness of the social environment, which means that obligations will be repaid" (306). Trust, in this case, plays a very important role as it determines whether individuals will or will not receive their payment for services rendered to others. In this scenario Coleman, similar to Putnam, recognizes the importance of trust in the creation of social capital; the difference is that Putnam describes trust as an intrinsic component of social capital, while Coleman sees it as an environmental condition, though a vital one, in the process of social capital's production. Other conditioning factors include the level of closure of the social structure (the closeness between individuals in a group), and the stability of the structure, which determines the survival of the social capital resources that are created within it. Also important are the ideological climate in which relationships are founded, since it instructs individuals how to interact with others, and the level of general affluence, which refers to amount of resources within the environment available to individuals. Generally speaking, the more resources people have at their free disposal, the less they will need to turn to others for help (320-1).

Another important social capital resource is "the potential for information that inheres in social relations" (310). Coleman explains that information becomes a precious resource as it helps us to make decisions and take actions (310). However, acquiring this kind of social capital requires both attention and time, which not all individuals have. This

is the time when social relations, such as those with friends and acquaintances, become useful, as these relationships can help people to acquire the information needed to make sound decisions. Coleman suggests that people usually obtain information through "social relations that are maintained for other purposes", such as those of friends who help us find jobs, or peers who give us advice when buying a car. In this case, the relationships that we maintain with our friends and colleagues provide us not only with emotional or professional support, but also with information that is useful for other purposes.

There are other forms of social capital that not only benefit the people directly involved in the social exchanges, but which also constitute a resource for the social unit within which these exchanges occur. Among these social capital resources are the effective norms of social organization, and authority relations. Regarding norms of social organization, Coleman states that effective norms constitute "a powerful form of social capital", as they help to organize social activity in achieving collective goals (311). Some examples of these norms are those that forbid criminal behaviour, or even more importantly, those that encourage unselfishness. Concerning the latter, Coleman explains,

> A [...] norm that constitutes an especially important form of social capital within collectivity is the norm that one should forgo self-interest to act in the interest of the collectivity. A norm of this sort [...] is the social capital, which builds young nations" (311).

These norms are essential for the public welfare as they serve to promote cooperation and to motivate people, either through rewards or sanctions, to work for the welfare of the community. Despite these benefits, Coleman also notes that norms of social organization

can actually constrain innovation and development within the community, as their sometimes-restrictive nature may hold back individuals from experimenting and pursuing new paths (Ibid).

Coleman explains that authority relations also constitute social capital as they allow the resolution of problems of collective action through concentration of power by focussing decision-making on specific subject areas (311). This authority represents social capital for both the leader and the group; the leader obtains the power to command the group's resources, and by delegating authority in a fewer hands, it becomes easier for the groups to reach an agreement for decisions to take action. The author suggests that people may actively create this social capital in order to organize a disparate group's constructive forces, and to concentrate them in the pursuit of a common objective (Ibid.).

Coleman also talks about voluntary organizations and how these institutions contain social capital that can be used for other purposes. Voluntary groups, which are usually created by their members to advance certain objectives, possess social capital in the form of norms, authority structure, information, and obligations of reciprocity. These groups are what Coleman calls "appropriable social organizations" as people can use the social capital resources that are in them to advance goals different from those in the group's original mandates (312). He further uses the example of voluntary groups to explain the "public good" aspect of social capital, claiming that the social capital resources that exist within a specific social structure can unintentionally produce benefits for the larger community. In the case of a group's norms and sanctions, this social capital resource from the group becomes a public good when its beneficial effects expand beyond the boundaries of the organized group itself (316). A good example of this indirect beneficial

effect is the Boy Scouts Association, whose principles of public service, excellence, and collective spirit will eventually benefit society at large through the Scouts' application of these norms to activities outside their structured setting.

Coleman concludes with the assertion that there are some social capital resources - especially those that produce indirect benefits for society (like norms and sanctions) - which may suffer from negligence or inattention, as many people do not invest in them specifically. To most people, such resources are seen as mere instruments for achieving specific goals. As soon as individuals achieve these ends or fulfill their needs, they may decide to abandon or disintegrate the once-useful social structure, thus neglecting and destroying the social capital resources that exist within it. In a related manner, underinvestment can occur even in the case of obligations and expectations, as individuals turn more often to government entities for help and rely less on others for assistance (321). These acts of parting from social organizations or particular relationships act to reduce the social capital existent within the social structure; individuals stop coming to others for help and thus cease the social exchanges that allow for the continuation of norms, obligations, and diffusion of useful information.

Coleman's view is helpful for studying social capital, particularly the way he observes it as being an array of social resources or instruments that are inherent to the relationships among individuals. For him, social capital is created out of the relations that occur in a social unit, which can include anything from a relationship between two persons to relations within a group or larger community. In his opinion there is no single specific element that can be called social capital; instead, there are different kinds of elements or resources that emerge from a relationship's dynamics. Social capital is embodied in the

elements or components of such relationships, and represents social resources in the form of obligations, information, norms, or authority relations, all of which constitute means by which people may advance their interests. Thus interpreted, social capital can be considered as any kind of social component or resource that is created through social relations, and that produces a benefit or resource for action, whether this action is collective (public) or particular (individual).

As for critiques of Coleman's definition, most comments are directed at his functionalist and abstract definition, which does not allow for identifying the object or entity (the social capital) until after the object has already carried out a function or facilitated an action. Thus, social relations contain a variety of potential resources that only become social capital after they prove their usefulness for accomplishing a purpose (Lin, 28; Field, 25; Newton 2001a, 227). On this point, Lin especially stresses the fact that "it would be impossible to build a theory in which causal and effectual factors are folded into a singular function [...] it would be incorrect to allow the outcomes variables to dictate the specification of the causal variable" (28). Other critics point to the issue of trust within Coleman's definition of social capital. Piotr Sztompka argues that Coleman's rational theory ignores the element of "basic trust", that is, an individual's personal predisposition for or against trust (1999, 66). Rational choice theory assumes as a premise that individuals always engage in relationships with others for the purpose of advancing their interests, not taking into account that this engagement may also be influenced by other non-rational conditions, such as individuals likes and dislikes (Field, 28). Alejandro Portes (1998) also makes an important critical point regarding to the closeness of social structures (networks) necessary for social capital production. He asserts that Coleman sees closeness as an

essential element for the creation of social capital, as closeness among participants reinforces norms and obligations, and also prevents defaulting. The problem with this view is that it ignores the benefits that can be brought to an individual through weak ties, e.g. ties with a low emotional involvement (5). Indeed, the view of social capital as resulting only from a high level of closeness within the social structure ignores the fact that such closeness may also be a bad thing. This "structural closeness" may also be seen with a negative connotation, as it may also imply exclusivity and a sense of inequality or inferiority with respect to those who are excluded. In their study of local governments in England, Maloney, Smith and Stoker explain that "closure facilitates social capital for participants [of the network or social structure] with shared [...] backgrounds, but makes these social capital resources unavailable for outsider voluntary and community associations" (2001, 92). Foley, Edward and Diani (2001) suggest that Coleman's "myopic" view on the effects of closeness arises from his view that social capital is neutral, and that "where it is present it facilitates the goals of actors, whether these goals be morally and socially desirable or not" (272). This exclusionist effect is well described in the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977), whose Marxist background led him to analyse social capital from a less humanistic view.

1.3. Pierre Bourdieu (1977):

In his social capital analysis, Bourdieu observes society's dynamics from a perspective of class struggle, power, and scarcity, where valuable resources such as money, prestige, and knowledge are limited and unequally distributed among society, and power is defined in terms of possession of these goods (Siisiainen 2000, 10; Field 2003, 15). In the context of scarcity, individuals who have the most of these valuable goods will join forces

in order to protect both the value of their assets and their positions of power. For these individuals, membership in such groups represents social capital, as this enrolment guarantees them access to the valuable resources of others. Bourdieu explains this idea in defining social capital as

> The aggregate of the actual or potential resources, which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, or in other words, to membership in a group, which provides each of its members with the backing of collectivity-owned capital (248-9).

According to Bourdieu, membership in a network or group is the key to social capital, since it is through this connection that individuals obtain the right to "use and borrow" the group's assets. In Bourdieu's terms, group wealth is equated to the sum of its members' assets. Each member constitutes a source of resources (money, prestige, or knowledge), which are made available to others within the group through relations based on mutual recognition of membership. Thus, the word "membership" embodies the essence of this type of social capital, by definition, as it implies the individual's connection to the group, and that through this "recognition of participation" each individual acquires the right to use other members' resources for their personal profit.

For Bourdieu, social capital is one of three forms of capital, which people accumulate to achieve their goals within society[10]. The other two types of capital are

[10] Bourdieu also talks about "Symbolic Capital" which refers to the value of a specific form of capital within society. Symbolic capital is embedded in society's culture and can act as a source of distinction/differentiation as some capitals may have more social value within society, e.g. nobility ties, than other capitals such as education and money

economic capital, represented in the form of money and material goods or properties (244) and cultural capital, as represented by skills and knowledge acquired through either upbringing [11]or formal education (Ibid.). In Bourdieu's view, social and cultural capital can be translated[12] into economic capital (252), and as such individuals will attempt to obtain as much of these two types as possible, with the intent of ultimately transforming them into an economic advantage. In other words, these two types of capital are a means by which to access other material assets. Thus, a doctor can utilize his medical knowledge (cultural capital) and his contacts (social capital) in order to earn money (economic capital). He uses his skills in curing people, and through his friends and colleagues he both acquires new patient contacts, and also accrues information/learns about techniques for improving his practice and increasing his earnings.

Although cultural capital can be obtained through education and learning of valuable skills, when it comes to the acquisition of social capital the process is not as clear. Bourdieu explains that creation of social capital requires effort from individuals, for example in transforming mere acquaintances into social capital resources (253). In order to create these relationships, individuals have to work at and invest in them; they must do things for others (favours, exchanging words, or offering gifts) for the purpose of reaffirming their connection with them. In this regard, the author states that "The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed" (250).

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[11] Upbringing, in this context, means the knowledge that the individual acquires through parental formation and education, and from the social environment in which the individual is raised.

[12] This conversion, however, does not occur without an effort. This process requires labour in transforming these abstract objects into material objects (money or properties).

Consequently, social capital in this view is created when individuals make conscious efforts to cultivate relationships that have the potential of being useful for their purposes.

Different from other definitions, in Bourdieu's conceptualization social capital can be measured in terms of both quantity and quality. He asserts that the worth of an individual's social capital may be assessed by looking at the network and the resources possessed by each of its members: "the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connection he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed [...] by each of those to whom he is connected" (249). Bourdieu assumes that social capital is a resource that is attached to the possession of a network; thus, any individual's amount of social capital is proportional to the number of people that they know. However, Bourdieu also states that the value of our social capital is not only determined by how many people you know; it also depends on who you know, as some individuals may have more valuable resources than others. This becomes apparent when looking at societal structure, wherein these resources are unequally distributed and the individuals who have most of these goods will use them as a source of power to realize their demands and meet their purposes.

It appears then that Bourdieu's analysis is useful as it allows for observation of the behaviour of the elite, and of the role of social capital in the reproduction of inequality. He observes that group formation is not "a natural given", but that it stems from the conscious effort of individuals to accumulate as many types of capital as possible in order to increase their capabilities and improve their social status. Bourdieu asserts that social networks are "the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly

usable in the short or long term" (250). Thus people invest time and effort in building networks with the intention of accumulating social capital, in the form of connections, of a level that guarantees them access to other cultural or economic resources. Even when these networks yield benefits for their members, however, they can also become a problem when looking at their exclusionary effects in general society. Taking into account the limited supply and unequal distribution of resources within society, people with valuable assets will attempt to create networks to protect their precious goods (249). Consequently, as networks seize and restrict the use of assets for their members only, these resources become scant or unavailable for those outside the privileged group. In this sense Bourdieu, differing from Putnam, believes that people create groups not only to promote reciprocity and trust, but also to gain control over socially valuable resources by denying outsiders the opportunity to benefit from these goods.

This idea becomes even clearer when looking at Bourdieu's description of group rituals, which are crafted with the intention of instructing members about the group's essence, resources, and boundaries (249). The author suggests that these rituals or social practices have a double purpose: to revalidate the group's identity, and to regulate the access to its resources. These rituals are important since, as people exchange favours, words, or things during such occasions, they are recognizing each other as members of the group and are thus recognizing the existence of the group itself (250). A good example of this is politicians gathering at restaurants and special political events, during which they exchange words and favours with each other. Through these exchanges they recognize each other as members of the political group, and also recognize the existence of the greater entity to which they belong, the political elite. Moreover, rituals are not just a

symbol of mutual recognition; they are also a protection mechanism for the group, as they allow people within the group to know each other well and to thus recognize those with whom they can make exchanges (Ibid.). In Bourdieu's words, these rituals are "institutions, which are designed to favour legitimate exchanges and exclude illegitimate ones, by producing occasions [...], places [...], or practices [...] which bring together in a seemingly fortuitous way, individuals as homogenous as possible" (Ibid.). In this sense, rituals bring together people with similar characteristics and power, which help to preserve the social status of the network, or in other words, the value of its social capital.

It is because these elements (group homogeneity, status and resources) give the group its social capital value, that inclusion of new participants is careful matter. Bourdieu explains that each participant is entrusted with the duty to protect the group's identity and assets (250); hence he or she is also responsible for ensuring that people coming into the network follow the norms and rituals established for these purposes. For Bourdieu, these mechanisms are a necessity, as with "the introduction of new members ...the whole definition of the group...its fines [ends], its boundaries, and its identity is put at stake [and] exposed to redefinition [and] adulteration" (Ibid.). In this context, group' members act as gatekeepers who guard the group's integrity by choosing to grant entrance only to people who they consider to fit with the group. In other words, they reserve for themselves the right of determining admission. This selection process, which is vital for group preservation, is at the same time an act of exclusion as it impedes others from accessing the group's social capital, and consequently its resources. When people are denied the right to participate in the group, they cannot even make contact with those who do have access to the resources that are unavailable or difficult to obtain. In that sense this act of exclusion

may actually harm the wider social structure as it impedes outsiders from obtaining the tools that they need for their development. It also perpetuates inequality, as people with a smaller amount of resources will remain in the lower social strata, since they cannot attain the requirements needed (in the form of education, money, prestige or experience) to access the upper circles of society.

Although Bourdieu's main purpose was to present social capital as an instrument for the reproduction and survival of the elite, by the same token he also shows the harmful effects that it may inflict on society when created within exclusionary lines. His definition explains how people's connections become useful tools for development, as they define the amount of assets or resources that individuals will have at their disposal. He also poses the idea of what I call "quality over quantity", as the value of social capital depends as much on the amount of people that an individual can count on, as on how much of each different type of capital each one of these people has. In the case of a student whose goal is to get into medical school, his friends from home are not as valuable as resources for this purpose as are his peers and professors from university, since his academic acquaintances may help him to obtain the tools needed (e.g. advice, expertise, contacts with the dean and other professors, information about loans and grants) to further his career. In Bourdieu's concept, the value of the connection will depend on how much of each type of capital the person is able to offer (e.g. money, prestige, education).

By this same token, some groups are more valuable than others, as they may contain more social capital within their membership. As noted by Bourdieu, when individuals realize that the resources which give them the power to achieve their goals are unequally distributed within society, they will presumably join forces to secure the

monopoly of these prized goods. Furthermore, they will also protect the value of their assets by only granting group membership to people who enhance their network's value and power. Consequently, those unfortunates who do not have enough resources to start with will be left outside of the group and will thus be limited in their opportunity to access the network's valuable assets. In this sense, as groups accumulate and lock resources within their boundaries, they also make it difficult for other people to benefit from these goods, and as a result create greater social inequality.

Bourdieu's definition shows in a clearer manner the connection of social relations with the concept of capital: individuals invest time and effort (labour) in building a network of lasting relationships (social capital) that can be later used to suit certain purposes or obtain certain resources (profit). Nevertheless, his analysis has also caught the eyes of other scholars, some of whom criticize his Marxist perspective. Authors such as Martii Siisiainen call attention to the fact that Bourdieu's analysis does not contemplate the idea of generalized trust, since for him individuals only plead to such universal values in order to satisfy their selfish interests (15). This criticism is also shared by John Field, who argues that Bourdieu's instrumental view of social capital, much the same as that of Coleman, does not allow for feelings of sympathy and amity among individuals, since "collective action is only a means to an end"(20). In Bourdieu's theory, solidarity is only viable because individuals are conscious of the benefits that such collaboration brings to them and their interests (Bourdieu, 249). Another important criticism of Bourdieu's analysis is that his biased vision of social capital does not allow for further exploration of its dark side (Lin 26-27, Field 19). These authors argue that Bourdieu does not really explore the negative externalities (namely exclusion and inequality) of social capital, since

he only studies it from the viewpoint of its beneficial effects for the elite. Lin also argues that Bourdieu ignores the significance of weak ties in social capital, mainly because he supposes that social capital can only be produced out of dense networks of social relations, where legitimate exchanges can only occur among group members (2001, 27). Finally, one of the most poignant critiques of Bourdieu's rationale is the fact that his theory does not allow for mobilization within the social structure (Field 2003 28, Jenkins 1992, Siisiainen 2000 15-16, Alexander 1995,141). Lower classes cannot improve their social status because they do not have the tools to work on their social development, and because they cannot achieve a better status, they cannot gain access to the circles of power. In this sense, for Bourdieu social capital serves to reproduce inequality and maintain the stratification of society.

1.4. Putnam, Coleman, Bourdieu and the idea of social capital:

After reviewing the works of these three authors and several criticisms of their theories, it is possible to find that even when differing in their perspectives on the social phenomenon, they share some common viewpoints as well. The authors share a benevolent view of social capital, looking at it from a perspective of benefits to group members (even when in Bourdieu's definition these benefits are also accompanied by negative by-products[13]). The authors also share the notion that social capital is a resource that is inherent to networks, even when its benefits may be enjoyed at either the collective or the individual level, or both. As far as social capital is embedded in relationships with others, social capital does not constitute a property of the individual, because even when he may enjoy the benefits of this relationship personally, he still cannot obtain these benefits solely for himself; such benefits are only attained when interacting with others. Thus, people do

[13] This point is also mentioned in Field, 2004, p. 26

not own social capital; they instead belong to networks that possess social capital. A third commonality between these scholars is their emphasis on the density of social ties. With the exception of Putnam, who briefly explores weak ties when talking about civic networks, the authors seem to give preference to dense, close-knit networks in the production of social capital. This insistence on close ties renders them somewhat blind to the possible consideration of looser ties, which may become a source of capital as they too give people the opportunity to access novel resources, for example in the form of different ideas and knowledge. (Despite this omission, it is important to state that Putnam later explores in more detail these weak ties or bridging networks in his book *Bowling Alone*, 2000).

Even though these commonalities are certainly important in the sense that they allow for the summarizing of the fundamental points and problems of a very complex concept, what makes them valuable for my research are their unique contributions, which provide me with useful tools in building the theoretical framework of my research. For studying the creation of social capital, I decided to use Putnam's collective definition of social capital. Although the accounts of Coleman[14] and Bourdieu provide detailed explanations of the creation of social capital by looking at the rationale and motivations of individuals, Putnam's collectivist viewpoint allows for studying social capital's origins from the position of a collective need for action. Because I examine parties as political groups, Putnam's concept allows me to explain how parties arise out of the collective need to organize the political process for the achievement of a particular good, which can be public (as in the establishment of a democratic system) or particular (as in creating political

[14] I have to admit at this point that Coleman's writings, even when prolific in explaining the creation of social capital, present some confusion when it comes to differentiating social structure from social relations.

identity, or in the advancement of political ideas). I believe that networks are the sources of social capital, since it is within these social entities that individuals are able to contact others and create relationships that will provide them with the tools needed in advancing their collective or particular goals. I also see norms as essential for social capital, as they promote cooperation (by regulating interactions among people), solidarity (by infusing people with collective values), and trust (by helping to predict behaviour). However, I do not agree with the idea of including trust in the definition of social capital. In this regard, I am more inclined to view trust as a result of social capital than as a cause of it as noted by Woolcock 2001, Foley and Edwards 2001.

Even when Putnam's explanation is useful for exploring social capital formation, this account is not very explicit in explaining the form of that social capital. This is the reason why on this particular point I prefer to use Coleman's definition, since he looks at social capital as a resource, indeed as many resources, which are obtained through engaging in relationships. Coleman looks at social capital as each and all of the elements of social interactions that can serve individuals in achieving a specific goal. These elements include obligations and expectations, the potential for information acquisition and dissemination, norms and sanctions, and relations of authority. Coleman's definition thus allows for a materializing of this ambiguous concept by giving it a name - 'resource' - and a form, or more aptly put, many different forms.

The contributions of these two authors, in concert, have helped to shape my social capital-based view on political parties, since I can see the formation of these groups from a collective initiative (as per Putnam) and can also study their processes and dynamics from the viewpoint of relational resources (as per Coleman). However, both authors proffer the

view that social capital can only bring benefits to society, without paying heed to the fact that networks include some individuals and exclude others. For this matter, Pierre Bourdieu's vision of social capital becomes quite useful, as he observes social capital from a perspective of inequality and exclusion. Bourdieu's definition, even when not directly pointing to the negative effects of social capital[15] shows how groups' dynamics may produce negative impacts on their surroundings. Bourdieu's work is useful in the sense that it helps to analyse how the dynamics of elite groups, especially political elites, may create exclusion by preventing the diffusion of useful information, and may create inequality by utilising power to influence political outcomes. Nevertheless, I am also quick to state that such phenomena of exclusion and inequality must be studied with care, since it should be taken into account that when studying parties in representative democracies, some political processes, such as leadership selection and decision making, necessarily require some degree of exclusion. In this context, what is important to observe is the particular circumstances in which exclusion and inequality stop being a democratic condition, and instead become a deliberate act of alienation by the elites. The following chapters will allow us to observe in more detail political elites' configuration and role in society, helping to determine in which particular cases the activities of these elites can be either beneficial or harmful to democracy.

Having now explored the concept of social capital, the next chapter will follow with an exploration of the other two subjects of this research: democracy and political parties. The chapter will start with an examination of the concepts of democracy from the viewpoints of Dahl (1971), Lipset and Lakin (2004), and follow with the review of the

[15] Indeed, he does see social capital as a generally good thing, since it helps the group, namely the elites, to maintain its assets of status and power

"political party" concept and its role within society. To conclude I will look at the works of Putnam (2000) and Uslaner (2004), which offer different perspectives in the connection between social capital and political parties. With this next chapter I will complete my theoretical framework, which will allow me to have the instruments (concepts) needed in order to analyze the connection between social capital, political parties and democracy.

Chapter Two: Democracy, Political Parties and the Social Capital Debate

After reviewing the social capital literature, my next step is to explain the context and particular subject, within which this theory will be employed, those being democracy and the political party, respectively. In this chapter I review the concepts of democracy and political parties, as well as previous application of the social capital theory in these areas by authors such as Eric M. Uslaner (2004) and Robert Putnam (2000). I start by looking at the concept of democracy, in order to obtain a clear notion of both its ideal form and its implementation as a political system. In studying this concept, I use Robert Dahl's (1971) definitions of democracy and polyarchy, as well as Seymour M. Lipset and Jason M. Lakin's (2004) 'minimalist' definition of democracy. These works are complemented with references to some other important authors such as Richard S. Katz (1980) and Alan Ware (1996), among others. After defining democracy, the next step is to define the specific subject of this research, in this case political parties. Here, I use the works of Lipset and Lakin (2004), Alan Ware (1996), E.E. Schattschneider (1942), and Robert Michels (1959), among others, to explain the structure and functions of this political entity[1], and to facilitate an understanding of the role of parties in democracy and social development. Finally I will discuss previous applications of social capital theory to political parties in studies by Putnam and Uslaner who explore the functioning of parties in the United States from the perspectives of social capital. Although the two authors hold different viewpoints with regards to the utility of these political entities as producers

[1] It is important to state here that although I will briefly explain party systems and models, the main instrument for analysis in this research will be social capital theory; thus, the previous concepts will be used only as supplementary tools to develop such analysis.

of social capital, their approaches are useful as they provide a background for my analysis. The main purpose of this chapter is to complete the conceptual background of my research, clarifying the definitions for my analysis of social capital

2.1 Democracy Revised:

Defining democracy poses a significant challenge, since the concept embodies so many ideas that go beyond its technical, voting system-related expression. Ideas such as equality, freedom, and rights come to mind when defining democracy, which tend to contribute to the difficulty of defining the term, since each of these words are worlds unto themselves. In this section, I look at the concept of democracy from its theoretical and practical dimensions: democracy as a political ideal, and as a feasible system of government. To this end I look at Robert Dahl's concept of democracy and polyarchy, through which he attempts to disambiguate the ideal from the actual political system. I also discuss at Lipset and Lakin's 'minimalist' definition of democracy, which is based on Dahl's principles of "inclusiveness and contestation". My goal in comparing these two definitions is to identify a concept of democracy that explains the essence of the term, and that is at the same time concrete enough for me to apply it in my research.

In his book *Polyarchy* (1971), Dahl defines democracy as "a political system [,] one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens" (p. 2). The author explains that for a government to be considered responsive, it should provide its citizens with the right to express their choices or 'preferences'. Citizens should also possess the means for supporting and communicating these preferences, both to their government and to fellow citizens. Most importantly, the individuals should enjoy the right that their preferences be considered

equal to all other expressed preferences, and thus that they will be appraised on equal terms regardless of their content or of who expresses them (Ibid.). Dahl considers these rights to be essential for democracy as they allow for citizens to communicate their needs and demands to their governments. The author observes that in a democratic society, citizens exert these rights through the following institutional guarantees,

> 1.Freedom to form and join organizations, 2.Freedom of expression, 3.Right to vote, 4.Eligibility for public office, 5.Right of political leaders to compete for support and votes, 6.Alternative sources of information, 7. Free and fair elections, 8. Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preferences. (Ibid. p. 3)

These institutional guarantees ensure citizens the freedom and the means to participate in the process of decision-making and to influence the government ruling ostensibly on behalf of their interests. In order to express and defend these interests, the rights to vote and to be able to compete in elections constitute the main instruments of a democratic polity. Through the act of suffrage people are able to voice their opinions about politics, and to evaluate the government's performance. By the same token, people's right to compete and defend their views allows for representation of the different political views existent in society, thus giving them an opportunity to be heard and for their opinions to be considered in decision-making. Finally, in order for these actions to be legitimate democratic processes, a democratic society must utilize institutions that ensure that such ideas compete on equal grounds, and that once the people express their decision or preference, public administration will respect it and adopt it. Thus, these institutional guarantees signify the right of the people to communicate their views, which is the only means by which governments can identify and respond to these demands.

For Dahl, these institutional rights "might provide [...] a theoretical scale along which it would be possible to order different political systems" (p. 4). The author goes further in his theorization to assert that these guarantees are better understood when looking at them as components of two democratic dimensions: inclusion and contestation (Ibid.). He explains that these rights are somehow reflections of these two dimensions, as they not only allow for people to participate in politics (inclusion), but also to defend their interests and ideas, by allowing competition towards making them a policy matter (public contestation). He explicates that in most of the so-called 'democratic' regimes, some of these rights have not been fully implemented, or they have been implemented but only to a nominal degree. In order to evaluate the democratization of a political regime, Dahl suggests that the implementation of these political guarantees must be evaluated in terms of how many people are allowed to participate in elections (inclusion) and to compete effectively[2] for government acknowledgement or position (public contestation).

In Dahl's view, there is "no large system in the real world [that] is fully democratized" (p. 8), and in this light he instead uses the term "polyarchy" to catalogue those systems that are closer to the democratic ideal, meaning those that provide the most inclusiveness and ability of public contestation, to their citizens. Departing from the point of "closed hegemonies" as a system that guarantees no freedoms or rights, and ranging to "democracy" where citizens enjoy these institutional rights in full, Dahl places political systems on the democratic continuum according to the amount of inclusiveness and contestation that they provide to their populace. Dahl defines polyarchy then, as "relatively (but incompletely) democratized regimes [...] that have been substantially

[2] I use the word 'effectively' here to differentiate from systems where public contestation is implemented only at the nominal level, in which competitors do not have a real chance to win.

popularized and liberalized, that is highly inclusive and extensively open to public contestation" (Ibid.). The relevance of such a concept is explained in Dahl's justification for creating the word:

> Some readers will doubtless resist the term polyarchy as an alternative to the word democracy, but it is important to maintain the distinction between democracy as an ideal system and the institutional arrangements that have come to be regarded as a kind of imperfect approximation to the ideal (p. 9)

With this terminology, Dahl separates the model as an ideal from its imperfect (and realistic) manifestations. He considers that this distinction is necessary as it helps to evaluate current systems in a more realistic perspective, not as "perfect democratic systems," but as approximations to the "ideal of a democratic system." From my own perspective, I agree with Dahl in regard to the use of the term polyarchy as a substitute for democracy, as the latter implies the full implementation of a series of rights and obligations that not even the most advanced regimes have been able to meet yet.

Based on these insights, authors such as Seymour M. Lipset and Jason M. Lakin (2004) have used Dahl's theorization to create a minimalist concept of democracy, focusing on the processes of participation and contestation. Lipset and Lakin define democracy as:

> An institutional arrangement in which all adult individuals have the power to vote, through free and fair competitive elections, for their chief executive and national legislature. Thus, democracy is a system of political rights that specifies how leadership should be designated at the highest national level in a polity.[3] (p. 19)

This definition, which specifically points to the electoral processes of participation (voting) and contestation (competitive elections), embodies a very succinct definition of democracy that does not include any of the civil rights and liberties that are usually

[3] Although there are other political positions at the local and regional level, this particular concept works in the present study since we are only dealing with the allocation of national powers.

attached to the concept. The authors purposefully omit the inclusion of rights and freedoms in their concept, as the intent of their minimalist view is to include only those elements that are the basis of the concept itself, namely inclusion and contestation. Lipset and Lakin defend their decision to leave out essential principles such as free speech and freedom of association as there is still debate about which rights should be part of the meaning of democracy, and to what extent these rights should be protected. The authors also omitted to mention institutions that are considered part of a democratic society such as free press and political parties, as they considered that such institutions could also exist in non-democratic regimes (p. 21). Lipset and Lakin summarize their argument by stating that in order for these principles and institutions to have legitimacy as democratic entities, they should exist in conditions of inclusiveness and contestation (Ibid.).

Lipset and Lakin argue that as in current usage, the word 'democracy' is synonymous with many other ideas such as freedom and equality, which although are essential for building a democratic environment, are not per se part of the democratic definition (p. 26). They claim that although the definition of democracy is usually associated with principles such as equality, freedom, and 'better society,' democracy should not be confused with these terms since it only applies to the process of institutional contestation for political leadership. They insist that the political scientist must be careful, when studying democracy, to separate the definition from all the moral assumptions that are attached to it, since these assumptions only complicate the analysis. They explain that "we are dealing with democracy, not freedom nor equality, not social policy nor free markets [...] the moral value of democracy is an issue altogether different from the study of its existence" (p. 25). This does not mean that they do not recognize the significance of

these elements as they relate to democracy, they simply separate the subject (democracy), from the environment and conditions in which it occurs:

> While we do not define democracy as including these freedoms [of civil and political liberties], it is nevertheless clear that a society that functions on the basis of contested elections will be more likely to sustain such liberties. A contested system, [...] brings a wider range of interests and people into the polity. It affects the structure and style of leadership and gives people more control of their own lives.[4] (p. 32)

For democracy to occur these conditions of freedom and rights must be put in place; however, the term "democracy" only refers to political participation and contestation of power under institutional rules. Although it seems a limited definition, it is nevertheless useful since it provides a concise idea of what democracy is, particularly a system in which all individuals participate in the process of choosing, among competing alternatives, how and by whom they want to be governed.

Looking closely at this definition of democracy, I do agree with the authors to the extent that even when some other elements may be included, the core of the definition basically relies on the two principles of inclusion and contestation. A system that contemplates these principles must necessarily provide enough freedom for people to participate, and different alternatives to choose from. When a system provides its people with the freedom to participate in the choosing of their leadership, it is also allowing them to decide under which ideas and precepts they want to be governed. This decision is, indeed, a manifestation of the general will of the people, or at least the majority of them, to find the best system of government through which to pursue their interests. However, for these decisions to be legitimate the electorate must be provided with alternatives from which to choose, and a system of contestation guarantees that there will be at least two

[4] This comment of Lipset and Lakin's is based in Dahl's analysis of the system of public contestation. ("Polyarchy", p. 21)

options from which to decide. Thus, Lipset and Lakin's definition provides a realistic standard by which we can evaluate democracy in political regimes, even those that are at the early stages of democratic development. From my own personal perspective, I consider that the Lipset and Lakin definition of democracy helps to operationalize Dahl's concept of polyarchy, as it provides a departure point from which political regimes may develop towards the ideal of becoming true democracies. Hence, when talking about current democratic regimes, I will actually be referring to polyarchies that are in the process of evolving towards the democratic ideal.

Before ending this definition, it is important to point out that this concept of democracy is mainly oriented to what is called the "representative liberal democracy model." In this model people do not directly participate in decision-making, but have the freedom to elect the person or leader who will represent their interests. In this system, decision-making powers are subjected to the rule of law and decisions are guided toward the welfare of the majority. There are others models such as that of direct democracy (Heywood, 2000, p. 126) and deliberative democracy (Cohen, 1989; Johnson, 2006). However, I decided to focus on the representative liberal model, as it this system is one of the most widely spread in the literature on social capital.

2.2. Political Parties

Political parties are primarily defined as organizations whose main goal is to win the control of government, or in other words, to win the power to influence decision-making through electoral procedures (Heywood, 2000, p. 218; Schattschneider, 1942, p. 35; LaPalmobara and Weiner, 1966, p 341; Katz, 1980, p. 4; Epstein, 1967, p. 9). Furthermore, other scholars, like Edmund Burke (1770), have attempted to go beyond the

competition aspect to focus on representation of interests; explaining political parties as "a body of men united, for promoting by the joint endeavour the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed" (As cited in Bredvold and Ralph, 1960, p. 134). Alan Ware, in an attempt to cover all of the characteristics of a political party, defines it as "an institution that (a) seeks influence in a state, often by attempting to occupy positions in government, and (b) usually consists of more than a single interest in the society and so to some degree attempts to 'aggregate interests.'" (p. 5)

Although Ware's concept is the closest to a comprehensive definition of this political organization, the notion of the parties as representative of social interests can be problematic when observing the role of interest- and pressure groups, which also work toward addressing a diverse array of social interests. A better way to describe parties could be to look not at what they are but what they actually do for society. In this task, the first step will be to look at the functions of political parties within society. Lipset and Lakin sustain that parties have important functions in this arena. Among the most important is their role as communicational channel between the public and the state (Lipset and Lakin, 2004, p. 64). They agree with Giovanni Sartori's view[5] (1976) that parties have an "expressive" function, meaning that they are the means through which preferences of and demands from citizens are transmitted to their government (Ibid.). In this regard, Sartori also adds that parties as communicational channels work both ways, since the state also uses the parties as means to transmit political information and authority. The author explains that whether in pluralistic or one-party systems, parties are essential channels for the state to communicate with the public:

[5] Sartori, "Parties and Party Systems", 1976, p. 42

> The need for a stabilized system of canalization follows, in part, [...] from a simple fact of magnitude. The larger the number of participants, the more the need for a regularized traffic [of communication] system. At this parties become channelling agencies, and the party system becomes the system of political canalization of society. (Sartori, 1976, p. 41)

Thus, political parties are the means by which information from the state is conveyed to a large group of citizens and, in the case of most democratic regimes, it also works in the opposite, that parties transmit information from below to the upper level of government.

However, a party's communicative function does not only occur in a vertical dimension, but also horizontally, among the different social sectors. Lipset and Larkin maintain that parties, as part of civil society, also perform an important function as mediators among the different social forces. They use the example of the political parties in the United States to explain the role of the party as social mediator:

> [A party's] function is to mediate not only between the atomized individual and the state but also between the different groups within civil society. The Republican Party in the United States [...] is made aware of and responds to the interests of those members of society who identify as democrats by the actions of the Democratic Party. (2004, p. 64)

In this case parties not only communicate to the public and to the government, but also serve as a communication channel for different social groups. As parties express their respective groups' ideas and demands, they help government and other parties within the political system to recognize the specific needs of these sectors, as well as to acknowledge different views with regards to politics, government performance, and policy preferences.

Although the informative function of parties constitutes an important part of their duties, some authors may offer the criticism that interest and pressure groups have been displaced parties from their informative role by interest and pressure groups (Stewart,

2002, p. 186; Ware, 1996, p. 4). Lipset and Lakin explain that even when interest groups may compete with parties in their informational or communicational function, there is still a characteristic that differentiates parties from any other organization, and it is their ultimate goal to 'win government power' (p. 65). This notion is supported by authors such as Schattschneider (1942), Schumpeter (1942), John Guy (1995), and Heywood (2000), who argue that parties differentiate themselves from other organizations due to their organized effort to gain public power. E.E. Schattschneider (1942) clarifies this idea in explaining that differing from parties, pressure and interest groups do not want to take over the government, but only to exert influence on its decisions (p.35). On the other hand, authors such as Martz (1980), Sartori (1976), and Ware (1996) contest this idea of power pursuit since it excludes minor parties, who even when not having a real chance of winning state power, still participate in elections and even get to play a key role in governments that require coalition for majority power in decision-making. However, for my purposes I will assume that when parties enter into the electoral contest they have at least an intention to win some degree of public power, and in that sense they are genuinely contesting for the winning of governmental power.

As parties attempt to gain public power, this unique goal imposes conditions and restrictions on their behaviour that make their positions clearer as compared to those of other groups. One of these constraints is that in order to compete for public power, parties cannot side with only one set of interests, but must reconcile the different demands and needs that exist among society. Parties must take into account the different pressing issues that exist within society and create a platform that appeals and serves not only to their popular base but also to the country's population as a whole. Lipset and Lakin identify

this action as the party's second important function, the 'syncretic function', which is "the aggregation of a wide array of issues and their translation into the practice of governance" (p. 67). Non-political groups can afford to focus their forces on a single purpose, like the 'green' or gay rights movement, since they only have an obligation to remain true to their principles and to defend their ideas. However, parties that are competing for public power, even if their platform is focused in one specific issue (e.g. to eradicate corruption, or to advance the agricultural sector), are once in power compelled to expand their agenda to take into account other issues and sectors. Lipset and Lakin explain this point clearly:

> The demands of governance require that parties, [...] take multifaceted responsibilities of state power seriously and develop plans for government that extend beyond a single interest issue. [...] In performing the syncretic function, a party [...] whatever its base, must take a position on all of at least most of the affairs of the state. Through this distinctive function, the party becomes more entangled in the web of the state, and less free to press its original concerns. (p. 67-69)

In this sense, when a party comes into power it has to negotiate with sectors of civil society in order to create policies that balance, or at least attempt to do so, the different demands that exist within society. A party cannot govern only for its members; it must create a strategy of governance that serves the interests of society in general, and in order to do so it must negotiate and compromise.[6] This does not mean that the party is obliged to dismiss its initial platform and proposals when coming into power (although many of them purposely do), but they will have to adjust their demands and ideas in a way that benefits the public as a whole.

Lipset and Lakin also state that, different to other organizations that do not seek votes, parties are deeply conditioned by "the country's party and electoral systems, as

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[6] James John Guy also explains this argument in his article political parties and interest groups (John Guy, 1995, pg 367).

well as the country's social cleavages and the party's own ideological niche" (p. 65). Thus, depending on these conditions, parties may opt for different strategies to achieve votes. The strategy pursued by a party in a country with a loose two-party system, like Venezuela, will be different from that pursued by parties in Mexico, where there was a single-party dominance system. In the same way, a party's strategy will be different under a proportional representation system than a simple majority system, or between a situation of deep socio-economic division and one wherein most of the citizens are more or less on equal economic and social ground. In that sense, a political party's behaviour is deeply conditioned by the political and socio-economic environment in which it emerges and exists, as this environment influences the way that it performs its functions. However, it is important to state that this is a dialectical relationship, as the party's actions also influence the way that members of this environment (both the government and the public at large) relate to each other, through the party's informative or "expressive" function.[7]

Finally, there is the function of choosing and training leaders that can take on the responsibility of managing government. Parties have the significant task of recruiting and creating leaders who can compete for elected offices; in other words, parties need to recruit the political elite. Robert Michels, in his book *Political Parties* (1959), rationalizes the need for political elites and parties as organizational entities in modern politics. Michels explains, "By parity of reasoning, [...] it is impossible for the collectivity to undertake the direct settlement of all controversies that may arise. Hence the need for

[7] Although Sartori, Lipset and Lakin define this function as the 'expressive function', authors such as Richard Martz (1980) and James John Guy (1995) observe it as a more of an educative function, since for them parties are agents of political education which promote new political ideologies and processes (Martz, p. 4; John Guy, p. 365).

delegation, for the system in which delegates represents the mass and carry out its will"[8] (p. 27). In order to carry out this general will, people must be prepared to take the responsibilities and challenges that come with the duties of public representation and management of power. Michels explains that as the primary responsibility of the delegate is "to serve the masses," the representation of these complex and contested mass interests requires some preparation from the leaders:

> Some individual ability becomes essential, [...] and a considerable amount of objective knowledge. It [...] becomes impossible to trust to blind chance [...] the choice of a delegation whose members must possess certain peculiar personal aptitudes if they are to discharge their mission to the general advantage. (p. 28)

Thus, the tasks of representation and governance require of the leaders certain inner qualities and acquired skills. In this regard Putnam, in his book *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (1959) points out that political elites are elected according to "ascriptive [qualities inherent to the individual] and achievement criteria [or successes and skills acquired by the individual]" (p. 57). Michels and Putnam agree on the fact that large societies require some sort of organizational system, and in such systems the power to guide and rule is usually vested in a small group that possess the intrinsic and acquired skills to manage power. Putnam further clarifies that these skills are exposed in the leader's technical knowledge, as well as in other innate capacities such as of the ability to negotiate, persuade, organize, and mobilize masses of citizens[9] (1959, p. 58).

Even when some qualities may come naturally, leadership traits are usually polished and some of them even learned in political parties, as party activities allow

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[8] Robert Putnam also makes this comment in the introduction of his book *The Formation of the Political Elites* (1956, p. 3).

[9] Putnam also presents political perspectives and social affiliations as criteria for leadership selection. Political perspective refers to the ideological views of the leadership and how these views blend with the needs of society, and social affiliations mainly refers to the social ties or connections that assist leaders not only to achieve, but also to exert and maintain power (pp. 59-63).

individuals to learn and show their organizational skills as well as to gain experience in dealing with political matters. There is the argument that these skills can also be learned in other activist groups and interest organizations, which is also true. However, differing from other groups, political parties are the only institutions that are prepared to not only, "challenge the power of the state [through opposition]," but to actually "assume office" (Lipset and Lakin, 2004, p.59). This condition creates a unique environment for future leaders, as it forces their analytical and problem solving capacities. All things considered, I still consider parties to be the institutions par excellence for this kind of leadership training, since they provide individuals with the conditions, skills, and environment to acquire and exercise all of these talents, especially those of interest conciliation and negotiation.

According to this description, parties should be observed as civic institutions that, besides their goal of attaining government power, also perform a vital mediating function within society by transmitting information among political actors and translating social demands into pragmatic policy choices. I consider this idea a more comprehensive concept of parties, since it not only targets the obvious political activity, but also shows their role in society. This concept is also useful in the sense that it allows for observing the connection between liberal democracy and political parties. In a liberal representative democracy, citizens only participate in the selection of their decision-makers. The sovereign exerts their will through free and contested elections, where they choose the persons that will represent their interest. Richard S. Katz, in his book *A Theory of Parties and Party Systems* (1980), supports this view:

> Once the scale of society [...] and the complexity of political life render selection by the lot unacceptable, representation based on popular election appears the only

> way to preserve the elements of popular participation, direction, and control implicit on democracy. (p. 1)

Parties are the main organizing entities of current liberal representative democracy. They provide the electorate with viable choices for filling political seats by training candidates who are prepared to take over the responsibilities of these positions. They also create an ideological identity for electors to identify with, and most importantly, they create political platforms that address the demands of their members, while reconciling these interests with those of the whole community. Authors such as Michels and Schattschneider also agree with this view of political parties as means through which citizens may exercise their democratic right of political participation. Both authors assert that the sovereignty of the people can only be expressed through elections. Through this act, people exercise their right to choose from among candidates of different group those who are the most suited to represent their interests, in order to transfer their individual power of decision to these individuals (Michels, pp. 39-40; Schattschneider, pp. 60-61).

Although the concept of the political party and its connection with democracy is now clear, to complete this definition it is necessary to explain the notion of the 'party system'. Alan Ware defines the party system as "the patterns of competition and cooperation between the different parties [that compete] in [a political] system" [10](p. 7).[11] For Ware, the concept of 'party system' is important since it is from these relationships of cooperation and competition that the 'menu of political options' is created, as parties implicitly decide which issues are 'left out' of the political debate (Ibid.). Furthermore, these relationships among parties not only influence political choices, but also influence a

[10] 'Political system' here refers to the political framework in which parties exist, e.g. presidential system, parliamentary system, dictatorship, etc.
[11] Also in Duverger 1954, p. 203; Sartori, 1976, p. 44.

government's efficiency and ability to rule. This case is obvious when one examines how the number of parties winning seats in legislative elections can affect the potential to create government in a parliamentary system, or can influence the ability of the executive to find support in presidential ones (Wolinetz, 2006, p. 51).

For Andrew Heywood (2000) party systems are important as they determine the relevance of a party's functions within society (p. 219). He explains that the functions that parties perform in a two-party system are not the same as those performed in a multiparty system. In two-party systems, one party has the role of governance while the other's main function is to serve as opposition to the party in power, bringing up issues that are ignored by governing elites and offering criticism to government activity (Ibid.). In a 'multiparty' system, parties tend to be more like political brokers, each of which represents a particular group of interests. In this type of system, parties attempt to exert influence through coalitions or electoral alliances[12] (Ibid.). In reality, there are many different party system classifications: two-party systems, multiparty systems, dominant party systems, two-and-a-half party systems (Blondel, 1968), etc. Most of these classifications are based, among other factors, on the electoral laws that rule political designation, whether is plurality or majority vote, or proportional representation (PR). Other important factors that influence 'party system' formation are socio-economic conditions (social cleavages), constitutional norms and political institutions, national culture or ideological values, and even the country's history, as past events create experiences that affect political organization and electoral choices.

[12] Heywood explains that even in one-party systems, parties have the function of government, by creating "a fused party-state apparatus" (219). However, since there is only one party in this system, I am more likely to see it as a political system (like a dictatorship) than as a party system.

For the purpose of my research, what is most important to understand from this discussion of the party system is that it provides parties with a guide for formulating strategies of action and learning the role that they have to play in society. Finally, with regards to party system classifications, my conclusion is that even when there are fewer categories than there are countries, each party system is unique to each country, as each system is a reflection of the respective country's political, social, economic, and even historical circumstances.

2.3. Democracy, Political Parties, and Social Capital

After defining democracy and its relation with political parties, the next step will be to observe what the connection is between these two concepts and the notion of social capital. For this task we start by examining the works of Robert D. Putnam[13] and Eric M. Uslaner[14], whose writings analyse the connection, or lack thereof, between social capital, democracy and political parties.

2.3.1. Robert Putnam- *Bowling Alone* (2000)

In this book, Robert Putnam studies the decline of civic engagement in United States by examining citizen participation trends over the last 40 years, and investigating how this decrease in 'civic participation' has negatively affected American society. Putnam uses the book to explain how these lower levels of civic engagement have reduced societal stocks of social capital, as people do not engage in social interactions, and thus cannot build the networks, norms, and trust that are needed to advance public action.

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[13] *Bowling Alone; The Collapse and Revival of America Community* (2000)
[14] Political Parties *and* Social Capital, Political Parties *or* Social Capital (2004)

In the chapter on political participation, Putnam analyses how general political activity, especially electoral activity, has deeply declined[15] over the past 30 years (pp. 31-32), while party organizations have grown "richer, bigger and more professional" during this same period (p. 37).

Looking at this incongruence, Putnam poses the question: "how can we reconcile [...] organizational health, as seen from the parties, and organizational decay, as seen from the voters' side?" (p. 39). He sees the answer to this question in the increasing "professionalization and commercialization of politics in America" where face-to-face contact and collaborative efforts among party followers is being replaced by anonymous fund-raising calls and professional marketing groups. The author states that in the last 30 years, "Financial capital - the wherewithal for mass marketing - has steadily replaced social capital - that is, grassroots citizens networks - as the coin of the [political] realm" (p. 40). Putnam explains that parties' financial and professional strength, even when having improved their internal structure and performance, came at the price of democratic development, as citizens have become less active and more indifferent to political matters (p. 37-38). Putnam states that citizens' increasing disaffection with politics goes beyond the electoral booth to the simplest acts of political participation such as "attending to local meetings, [and] serving in local organizations" (p. 42).

Even though this decline in participation has occurred for most of political-related activities, what worries Putnam the most is that activities that require collective engagement are plummeting faster than self-expressing (individual oriented) actions (p. 44-45). He explains that the reason for worry is that these cooperative activities are

[15] More than a quarter compared with the rates of 1960,according to Putnam studies on American presidential voting trends 1828-1996.

sources of social capital, as they help individuals to make contact with others and create bonds of trust that allow for cooperation and democratic debate. Activities such as serving on committees, different from acts of self-expression like writing letters, require collaboration with others and understanding of the public interest (p. 45). For Putnam, both kinds of activity – collective and self-expressive - are essential for a democracy to work, as they allow individuals to express themselves and, at the same time, to learn how to negotiate their views with others (Ibid.). Moreover, Putnam advises that the increasing disengagement from simple political activities, such as participating in local councils and events, will tax American politics in the long run, as there will be less opportunity for citizens to acquire the skills and values needed to participate in the political arena (p. 45). Through participating in these activities, individuals learn valuable skills such as those of negotiation and public speaking, but most importantly, they learn values such as compromise, cooperation, and collective good, values that are essential for democracy and also themselves a form of social capital.[16] The author summarizes this point in saying, " It is precisely those forms of civic engagement [...] that brought citizens together, those activities that most clearly embody social capital, that have declined most rapidly" (Ibid.).

Putnam suggests that in order to recover America's civic life from its state of apathy, it is necessary to promote social capital in the form of voluntary civic associations. The author explains that current liberal democracies require an active citizenry that not only perform their electoral duties, but also engage in the improvement of society. In that sense, voluntary associations are the most suitable means for encouraging this kind of

[16] These values constitute social capital, as they are norms that help to organize collective action for solving common problems.

civic engagement, as they not only promote democratic values and political skills[17], but also encourage people to organize their ideas and resources to the end of achieving collective goals (p. 338). For Putnam, these associations act as a loudspeaker for citizens: "when people associate in neighbourhood groups, PTAs, [and] political parties [...] their individual and otherwise quiet voices multiply and are amplified" (Ibid.). These voluntary organizations help to organize citizens' disparate forces into a united front, allowing their message to spread and have an impact on society. Although the author advocates for voluntary organizations, he is also quick to state that these groups "are not everywhere and always good" (p.341). Indeed, he makes this distinction when suggesting that bonding social capital, like the one created in homogeneous organizations, is more likely to promote illiberal tendencies as it reinforces in-group loyalty and exclusive identities (p. 23; p. 358). Putnam suggests that for advancing democratic values, bridging social capital - which is mostly found in heterogeneous networks - constitutes a better alternative since it tends to promote linkages across social divides, encouraging tolerance, compromise, and broader identities (pp. 22-23).

Putnam becomes more specific when referring to political civic engagement, as he suggest that local and even informal voluntary groups are more effective than national organizations for political learning, as individuals get involved in the formulation of democratic politics (pp. 338-344). He explains that these local groups allow members to get in contact with different ideas and to experience first-hand the process of decision-making, which helps to bolster tolerance, public spiritedness, and reciprocity (pp. 339-340). National groups, whose membership is generally spread around the country, are

[17] Values such as cooperation, tolerance, sense of public good, and political skills like those of public speaking, negotiation, running meetings, writing letters, and participating in debates with civility.

mostly lead by professional staff that is in charge of making decisions on behalf of their members. Although most of these organizations have heterogeneous membership, their main problem is the fact that they replace membership activism with membership dues, which effectively denies citizens the opportunity to participate in policymaking and to have a real input in the organization. For Putnam, "Politics without face-to-face socializing and organizing, [...], without social capital is politics at distance [...] since participants need never [to] meaningfully engage with opposing views and hence learn form that engagement" (p. 341). In that sense, local voluntary organizations are relevant to democracy because they expose citizens to democratic processes and to the business of day-to-day politics.

In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam observes the linkage between social capital, political parties, and democracy at the local level. He believes that social capital is essential for a democratic polity and that voluntary associations of civic engagement are the key in promoting this political ideal. However, he does not see this connection occurring at the macro level of the national political groups, where professional elites have taken over policy making, and mass-marketing specialists have replaced party workers. The real connection occurs at the community level, where local political groups allow individuals to interact with others, exchange political views and build bonds of trust that serve to further a common cause. Although he mentions political parties as one of the many voluntary associations that can promote civic engagement, he is nevertheless sceptical of the major political groups, which have surrendered to the "professionalization and commercialization of politics" trend (p. 39). He advocates more strongly for the effectiveness of small, local organizations, those that promote heterogeneity in their

membership and encourage people to get involved in the solution of common issues, as a means to endorse democracy and political participation.

2.3.2. Eric M. Uslaner- Political Parties *and* Social Capital, Political Parties *or* Social Capital

In "Political Parties and Social Capital, Political Parties or Social Capital" (2004), Uslaner presents a careful critique of Putnam's views on the connection between social capital, democracy, and political parties. In contrast to Putnam, Uslaner starts his argument by stating "the linkage of parties and social capital, [...] is misplaced" (p. 2). He explains that for Putnam "almost all forms of social interactions help people get together to take collective action [and] the decline in social capital - in membership in voluntary associations, in informal socializing, [...] and of course in participation in political parties - is worrisome" (Ibid.). However, for Uslaner, not all civic groups, especially not political parties, are useful for creating the kind of social capital that Putnam envisages. Uslaner argues that if we follow the social capital premise that voluntary organizations create social capital by helping people to interact with others and establish the bonds of trust that allow for organization of collective action, then political parties fail to meet this standard in three ways. First, Uslaner claims that political parties cannot be sources of social capital because they are not interested in having their membership actively involved in the organization. The author explains that parties, different from other voluntary associations, "are [...] devoted to winning elections and governing. They do have members, but widespread participation in party governance will effectively destroy the ability of parties

to win elections and formulate policy"[18] (p. 2). Thus for Uslaner, parties are unable to promote the kind of social interactions that Putnam deems essential for democratic advancement, since to do this would necessitate giving up control over decision-making and the planning of organization's strategies (p. 11). Furthermore, since most of the major parties' members exercise their partisanship through donations and membership dues, they hardly ever have an opportunity to get together and socialize with each other. Hence, parties cannot produce social capital since they do not offer their members the opportunity to establish the kind of regular interactions that helps to build relations of trust and promote collective activity.

Secondly, according to Uslaner, Putnam has an exaggerated and mostly romanticized view about political participation in America, as citizen participation in political parties was not that significant to begin with (p. 6; p. 11). The author asserts that "while Putnam bemoans the sharp drop in citizens working for a political party in the United States, the 1973 starting point was just 6.3 [%] of the America population, down to 2.8 [%] by 1994 [...] the share of people who worked for the party at any time [...] was minuscule" (p. 11). Uslaner sustains that over the years the percentage Americans who worked in parties has historically been small, and even in cases of parties whose membership were actively involved, these parties tended to be minor parties who were mostly concerned with representing ideals rather than winning elections (p. 3). The author explains that once these parties did achieve positions of power, such as coalition partner or opposition, they tended to become more moderate in their positions and limit member input in matters of planning and policy making (Ibid.). Also, Uslaner suggests that

[18] On this point of his argument, Uslaner draws on the works of Michels (1959) and Schattschneider (1941).

Putnam's views are romanticized when examining the connection between political parties and other voluntary organizations. He explains that due to the different nature of these entities, parties - which are mostly in search of power - are usually at odds with voluntary organizations, which are more concerned with pushing their specific agendas than in creating platforms for public governance. In this regard, Uslaner states:

> Parties and other voluntary organizations have an uneasy relationship [...] these groups provide both activist and funding for the parties. Yet, they also constrain the parties. Outside groups will set the party programs, [which] will produce strains between a party seeking to win a national election and an outside group committed to a particular platform. (p. 12)

For Uslaner, parties are in a contradictory situation, since they require voluntary organizations to provide them with the financial resources and professional labour needed to organize and run campaigns. In the same manner, they need devoted citizens to do the hard work of campaigning and mobilizing people to vote. However, they must limit the participation of these members, especially those with strong idealistic views, in order to create platforms that engage the rest of the voting population. Hence, parties are neither interested in bringing together civic forces, nor propitiating the social interactions that encourage collaborative efforts. In that sense, Uslaner declares, "parties seeking to win elections have an incentive to limit participatory democracy. [...] Too much social capital can mean weak parties that cannot contest elections" (pp. 11-12).

Finally, Uslaner makes the point that parties are not the most suitable associations through which to develop generalized trust, which is an essential element of social capital. He assesses that "The whole purpose of joining a political party is to interact with people who shares your values. So party membership is likely to enhance particularized (in-group) trust at the expense of [generalized] out-group trust" (p. 4). This case, the author estimates, is especially true when looking at minor parties whose main purpose is to

advance their political principles. People in these parties are more likely to develop this kind of trust, due to their similar views and their strongly felt commitment to their cause. Uslaner explains that parties led by strong ideological activists "are likely to see cooperating as illegitimate" (p. 13), viewing elections as battlefields where parties defend their right to install their ideas as principles of governance. The author states that in this case "the further part parties are from each other on an ideological spectrum, the less likely they are to bring about trust in people who are different from oneself" (Ibid.). In the case of parties who are in search of power, they are usually led by small elites who consider electoral conditions rather than ideological values as the proper basis for action (Ibid.). Uslaner explains that this does not mean that these parties do not have ideologies; they do, and they very much need them in order to attract followers. However, ideological principles should not become extreme to the point that they jeopardize the main goal, which is the acquisition of power (p. 12). In order to run smoothly, these parties need to work free from the pressure of ideological activists, so that they might achieve positions of compromise that allow them to govern with the support of - or at least without too much opposition from - the other parties (p. 15). In this scenario, trust may emerge between opposing groups, but this kind of trust will occur only among the elites that direct the parties, that is, those who manage to produce pacts and to plan policies. This kind of trust is very similar to that of exclusionist and inward-looking associations, which does not relate to Putnam's idea of trust in social capital, since it does not allow for information to be widely shared and for people to actively participate.

According to this reasoning, Uslaner claims that political parties cannot be considered as sources of social capital as other voluntary associations, since political

parties do not promote the kinds of interaction that are needed for social capital to emerge. Indeed, Uslaner suggests that parties are more comfortable with a chequebook membership rather than a group of active participants, since having more people involved in decision-making leads to increased difficulty for parties to achieve consensus towards action. Furthermore, the party's unique goal of winning government makes for a difficult relationship with other voluntary organizations and civic groups, since their commitment is oriented toward achieving power and not toward defending a specific ideological agenda. Hence, even when parties may act as a means to bring together different sectors of civil society, they do this task with much effort, sometimes risking political stability and even integrity, in the process (p. 11). Lastly, In Uslaner's view, parties, whether they are competing for electoral victory or defending a particular cause, are not likely to produce the generalized trust that is needed for social capital to develop, as these institutions usually promote in-group, particularized trust.

Through this work, Uslaner acknowledges the works of other authors such as Andersen and Young (2000), and Jeremy Weinstein (1999), who have attempted to expose the linkage between social capital and political parties. He cites Andersen and Young's work as they discuss the connection between American political parties and other civic associations, such as labour associations, business firms, and ethnic groups. Andersen and Young's argument explains that American parties have a strong connection with these civic groups, as most of them provide the resources and the people needed to build the political organizations. However, Uslaner is also quick to assert that in today's politics, parties rely more heavily on "advocacy groups that place little emphasis on direct contact with citizens and are more concerned with raising funds for campaigns" (p.

6). For Uslaner, the views of Andersen and Young are similar to those of Putnam, which mainly tend to exaggerate the role of voluntary organizations in the making of political parties (Ibid.). With regards to Jeremy Weinstein, Uslaner considers his work one of the most remarkable as the author manages to present the connection between party mobilization and political participation (p. 4). Uslaner admits that there may be some truth to the argument that parties can produce civic participation, as party contact with citizens exerts effects in electoral turnouts (Ibid.). Although Uslaner concedes that party mobilization can affect political participation, he only sees this activism once every few years during election time, which does not allow for this activity to have more than marginal impact on civic life. The author resumes his argument by stating that parties "cannot afford too much participation. […] Parties don't need […] the camaraderie of […] a bowling league. Parties need to mobilize their voters on Election Day. At other times, the party leaders prefer that voters go their own way" (p. 14). For Uslaner, there is no connection between social capital, political parties, and democracy, since parties are not interested in building social capital in the first place.

Although Putnam and Uslaner's pieces make a significant contribution to the study of social capital and its relationship with political parties, looking at these authors' conflicting positions it is difficult to decipher whether there is a real connection among these concepts and the notion of democracy. In one hand, Putnam sustains that there used to be a connection in the past, when parties fulfilled their role as voluntary civic organizations, promoting community involvement in political matters and serving as 'schools of democracy' for individuals to learn civic values (p. 31) For Uslaner, this connection has never been there, since for him "social capital may […] be more of a

hindrance than a help to a party's mission." (p. 14) Both authors indirectly conclude that at the present moment parties are not able to produce the link between social capital and democracy, since they have (purposely) felt to perform their mediating and informative duties.

In spite of these conclusions, it is my view that parties are one of the main sources of social capital in a democracy, since they constitute the means by which people within the society comes together to perform a collective action: the act of decision-making. Through their different functions and their institutional structure, parties produce social capital by-products that influence the course of society's development. However, it is also important to look at how effectively parties perform these functions, and most importantly, how the environment in which they are located influences their performance. In this regard, contrary to Putnam's idea that voluntary associations -in this case parties- produce social capital that enhances democracy, I argue that a democracy environment is essential in order for parties (and other voluntary associations) to produce useful social capital. I make the distinction of "useful" because social capital is not always "a good thing", as groups' activities and internal organization may produce harmful effects for society. In the next chapter, I will analyse more closely the elements of the different social capital concepts from Putnam, Coleman and Bourdieu, and contrast them to the functions that parties play in current liberal democracies. I believe that by looking at political parties from a more eclectic and less benevolent social capital perspective, it is possible to see the how democratic conditions -or lack of thereof, can influence parties and their production of social capital.

Chapter Three: The Connection between Political Parties, Social Capital and Democracy.

Upon reading Putnam and Uslaner's arguments, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to imagine political parties producing social capital. Putnam sees current "cost-efficient" party practices as ineffective for creating social capital as they deprive citizens of the opportunity to participate in the political practices of debate, negotiation, and cooperation, and most importantly the practice of creating bonds of trust. Uslaner, on the other hand, does not even recognize that such a connection between parties and social capital exists. He argues that parties cannot promote the relations of reciprocity and trust needed for production of social capital since their main goal -achieving state power - requires a level of planning and coordination that cannot be attained in an environment of public participation. Overall, both authors agree that political parties themselves cannot be considered sources of social capital, since their practices and purposes are at odds with the ideas of participation, cooperation, and trust which are inherent to the theory of social capital.

Both authors make great efforts to explore the link between social capital and political parties, as well as to explain the reasoning behind their views. Nevertheless, I hold that the authors cannot perceive such a link, mainly because of their particular views on social capital; they focus on close, face-to-face interactions. Most importantly, both arguments noted above underestimate the influence of institutional setting in the creation of social capital. In contrast, I argue that the connection between social capital and political parties is better understood when looking at the un/democratic context in which parties develop as institutional settings influence party activity, and thus the kind of social capital that these entities produce. Furthermore, I also argue that parties are much more

likely to produce "useful" social capital when working in a democratic institutional environment. To develop my arguments, I will refer to the different perspectives on social capital of Putnam, Coleman and Bourdieu, using their works to analyse how such political organizations produce social capital by-products through their activities and internal structure. Through this analysis, I will show how democratic conditions may enhance parties' abilities to produce useful social capital that furthers democracy, as well as how the lack of such conditions may encourage the creation of less beneficial, even negative forms of this social resource. Throughout the analysis, I use the term "useful" to distinguish this positive and constructive kind of social capital, which can be used to advance the national interests (e.g. democratic norms, organization of the polity), from the non-useful and often negative kind of social capital, which is mostly directed to advance particular interests, often manifested as patronage or corruption. The reason for using these prefixes, instead of the most common "social and unsocial capital" [1], is that in my view it does not seem sensible to call social capital "unsocial", since as far as this resource originates from relations among individuals, it will always have a social connotation and implication attached to it. In this sense, I find it clearer to refer instead to the value of the social resource –useful or harmful- for achieving a specific purpose (e.g. national progress or democratic development).

The Connection between Political Parties, Social Capital and Democracy

3.1. Robert Putnam: Collective action - *Networks, Norms and Trust.*

[1] Examples of this common usage may be found in the works of Levi, M. 1995; Kumlin, S. and Rothstein, B. 1995; De Votta, N. 2002.

From Putnam's definition of social capital in *Making Democracy Work* (1993), we see that the main idea behind social capital is that it helps to coordinate collective action. He defines social capital as "the features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions" (167). Putnam explains that this social resource is created through networks of civic engagement, where individuals come together to work for a common cause, and learn the norms and build the trust that are needed for producing collective action (173). Following the author's rationale, networks of civic engagement are sources of social capital as *they coordinate collective action, provide the norms and information needed to perform these collective endeavours, and promote feelings of cooperation and trust among participants.*

3.1.1 Coordination of Collective Action:

After looking closely at the components of this hypothesis, it then seems that political parties should be considered sources of social capital, since the *raison d'être* of these political civic networks is to coordinate the collective act of decision-making within society (Huntington 1968[2], Michels 1959, Schattschneider 1942). One may observe that political parties coordinate collective action at two different levels. Firstly, at the direct, group level, parties coordinate collective activity as they allow for many separate voices to unite in promoting a specific political view and advancing their common demands (Burke 1770, 317; Keman 2006, 161-2; Vassallo and Wilcox, 2006; Fox 2005, 11). People often join a party because they identify with its views, and as the party offers several different avenues for participation (e.g. campaigns, activism, or financial contributions), it allows people several ways to join forces with others in promoting

[2] Cited in Berman 2001, p.38. Huntington expresses the idea societies need political institutions, parties among them, as they become the means to define and realize their common interests.

common ideals. Parties, more than any other civic organization, are essential for democracy, since these institutions constitute the only legitimate means through which social groups that hold opposite ideas of the "common good" can compete for state power (Lipset and Lakin, 2004; Chirstiano 1996).

Secondly, at the indirect, society level, parties coordinate political participation by providing political platforms that give voice to the different views and demands that exist within society[3] (Berman 2001, 42; Fox 2005, 11). By crafting these platforms and providing candidates who are capable of pursuing these goals, parties make possible for people to participate in decision-making by choosing, from among these different proposals, which political platform will ultimately be given the power to address society's prevalent issues. Thus, as parties create the alternatives from which the electorate will choose, they are indeed also coordinating collective political action. At this point, it is possible to see how parties coordinate collective activity -political participation not only at the direct, group level, but also at the indirect, society level. Locally, parties organize collective activity as they allow people to work together and more efficiently use their individual power in order to advance their political views. Using Putnam's words, parties are the networks that allow for the "bunch of strident sounds" that exist in society to come together as a "single clear voice" for conveying their message to the state (also in Sartori 1976, 43). At the societal level, parties coordinate civic participation by organizing elections, making it possible for citizens to decide, from among competing platforms relating to the public good, the platform which better suits their collective interests.

3.1.2. Norms and Procedures for Political Activity:

Parties also provide useful information for the coordination of political activity through their internal norms and processes. Parties' internal codes and operational procedures supply useful information to society by educating them about the process of democratic politics. Through their constitutions and bylaws-internal norms - parties explain their purpose and values to their members, instruct them in the procedures for political activity, and most importantly show them how to cooperate with others in achieving common goals. These norms are important because they help to generate bonds of trust among party members, by making them rely on each other to attain a common goal. Despite that internal party norms may teach party followers how to cooperate with and trust other members of the party, these rules are mainly intended to instruct group members on working together to achieve their particular group-related goals. However, parties have other means through which they are able to impart democratic learning not only to their members, but also to society in general. We will now examine how internal procedures such as interests aggregation and articulation, and recruitment of political leadership, are key for understanding how parties instruct democratic norms, by forcing party members to think and work for public ends, rather than party-specific ones.

3.1.2.1. Interests Articulation and Aggregation

The relevance of the function of "interests articulation and aggregation" arises from the fact that parties 'do not operate in an organizational vacuum', but are surrounded by a society that imposes a diversity of demands upon them. This fact necessarily implies that parties must engage in negotiation with the different sectors of society in order to identify the issues affecting them, and to come up with alternatives for addressing such issues. This negotiation process, however, is not smooth, as some of these interests may

differ and sometimes conflict with each other. It is at this point that parties must perform what Lipset and Lakin (2004) refer to as "the syncretic function" (67), which mainly refers to the aggregation and articulation of the different society interests, through bargaining and mediation. The diverse and complex nature of social demands makes party mediation essential for democratic politics, as it requires that they be "the clearinghouse for [social interests] – a means by which ideas are sorted, prioritized and made consistent with one another" (Fox 2005, 12). This process of interest aggregation and articulation is instructive for party members, as they learn that in order to create coherent and comprehensive policy programs, parties must mediate, negotiate, and often compromise on some of their own organizational goals in order to address society's most pressing issues (Fox 2005, 25; also Berman 2004, 45). Most importantly, through this process, parties reiterate the priority of the public good over the party's own particular goals. To make public policy, parties have to distinguish among different social interests (including their own), organizing and reframing these interest according to the principle of advancing the national interest (Schattschneider 1942, 31). Thus, the processes of interest aggregation and articulation educate party followers by making them realize that party objectives should be oriented to benefit the whole of society and not just a few sectors of it[3]. Finally, this process also teaches the electorate about the importance of compromise and tolerance, in the sense that it makes them recognize that probably no party agenda will fully address their particular issues, since parties in a good democracy must govern for the whole and not for the few. Individuals who cast their vote do so understanding that even

[3] It is important to clarify that this by no means suggests that parties will not pursue private interests, especially those of the people that provide them with the greatest support (Sartori 1976, 26). However, these interests would have to be addressed as public goals that will provide benefits not only for the private actors but for the public/electorate as well (Ibid).

when no party will satisfy them completely, some are closer than others to their political views, and are thus more likely to perform according to their political ideas (Katz 1980, 19).

In this way, parties perform according to Alexis de Tocqueville's "schools of democracy" idea: training people in the processes of compromise and negotiation that are necessary for a vibrant democracy. Tocqueville (1835), enunciated the idea that although political associations by definition seek to impose their views on the polity, in practice the interplay among them contributed to the emergence of tolerance and democratic norms and rules[4] (¶6). Their mediation and negotiation processes not only instruct people on the value of tolerance and compromise, but most importantly instruct them on the norm of collective consciousness, by educating citizens to think in terms of a greater, national community. Lipset and Larkin (2004) explain that parties, as political-civic institutions competing for state power, are the only institutions that are able to reconcile the private and the public entities, merging private interests with public goals and transforming them into practices of governance (68, 91; also in Berman 2001, 42).

3.1.2.2. Recruitment and Preparation of Political Leadership:

There is another party process that I consider useful as well as instructive for the democratic polity, and that is the recruitment and preparation of political leadership. Pipa Norris (2006) describes this process as "one of the classic functions of political parties" as they perform a "gate keeping role in nominating candidates for office at all levels of government" (89). This process is important because it is through the recruitment and nomination of political candidates that parties are able to supply people with the skills and

[4] In Tocqueville, "Democracy in America" (1835), Volume 2, Chapter 7 *Relations of Civil to Political Associations* ¶ 3-9, Retrieved from the online library at the University of Virginia on Dec 21, 2006)

the expertise necessary to manage the public affairs; that is, the political elite. Parties are well recognized for being "training camps" for most future politicians (Putnam 1976, 42), as their involvement in party activities helps them to acquire the knowledge and experience needed to face the challenges of holding public office. Besides providing prepared candidates for political positions, I believe that recruitment and nomination are instructive processes in that they help people to realize the complexity of public administration, and the level of coordination necessary for its efficient management (Schattschneider 1942). Because people recognize the impossibilities of direct participation in everyday politics and the complexity behind public administration, they entrust political parties with the duties of managing public affairs, and finding the people possessing the requisite ability and knowledge to perform this task (Michels 1959). In that sense, parties teach people the important lesson that in order to attain the greater good, it is necessary to recruit individuals who are capable of organizing the collective forces in an efficient manner to achieve it.

3.1.3. Trust and Cooperation:

Finally the last component of Putnam's social capital theory is the idea of trust and cooperation, which, together with the other social features already mentioned - norms and networks - constitutes the social resource that allows for societies to coordinate collective action in advancing the public welfare. In this regard, different to Putnam, I believe that social trust can only be produced when the environment allows for people to be trusted. Taking the idea from Coleman (1990) and Woolcock (2000), I consider that social trust is more of an environmental condition than an element of social capital. This does not mean that networks cannot produce trust. Indeed, it is through participating in

party activity that individuals are able to develop a sense of community that favours the emergence of group trust, as members identify themselves as part of a common cause. This trust is essential for party activity, as it facilitates cooperation among members and thus, the coordination of collective endeavours. However, when we talk about social trust (the kind that is considered useful social capital), networks are not likely to promote it by themselves if the environment does not provide individuals with conditions that assure them that their well being will not be in danger when cooperating with outsiders (Rothstein and Stolle 2003, 199; Levy 1998). It is at this point that political institutions such as the state, national constitutions, and elections come into play, as they provide individuals with a kind of "collateral" when engaging in interactions with others. The role of the state in particular is fairly important in the creation of a democratic and civically engaged society (Tarrow 1996, 394-5). In the way that states enforces constitutional rights and rules, sanctions lawbreakers, and ensure that political processes (e.g. elections, legislative activity, management of public finances) follow the rule of law, they create the atmosphere in which social trust may grow (Margaret Levy 1998, 86; Brehm and Rahn 1997[5], 1014). Rothstein (1999) also explains that "if people believe that the institutions that are responsible for handling "treacherous" behavior act in fair [...] and effective manner, and [...] believe that other people think the same of these institutions, then they will also trust other people" (21).

Other democratic arrangements such as constitutional norms, the bill of rights, and elections also encourage social trust by giving people the freedom and the means to take part in the process of political decision-making (Lipset and Lakin 2004, 32-33). In the case

[5] In their study of the General Social Surveys Data from 1972-1994 the authors concluded that "the more confident respondents are in the major federal institutions, the more likely they are to participate in their communities" (1014).

of liberal democracies, institutions such as the bill of rights and the constitution are mainly created with the purpose of guaranteeing individual rights, preserving the rule of law and for defining the framework for relationships between individuals and the state. Electoral systems, on the other hand allow for citizens to hold political elites accountable for their actions, and help to ensure that government activity is oriented to carry out the public interest (Keele 2004, 7). Hence, a state that holds democratic norms, ensuring people the freedom and the means to express their preferences and to hold their representatives accountable, is more likely to promote trust, as individuals in such a state perceive that their participation will have an impact in the direction of society (Jamal and Heydemann 2004, 8). At the same time, this trust is what gives the state the legitimacy it needs in order to act on behalf of its citizens, and the power to dispense legitimate mandates and provide effective sanctions. Ullmann-Margalit (2004) suggests that this idea is realized when "citizens' trust in their institutions, considering them a necessary condition for a well-functioning democracy" (75). In that sense, the order of the elements in the democratic equation is different than in Putnam's view, in which voluntary associations produce the social capital needed to advance democracy. Ronald Inglehart suggests this idea when he says, "It seems likely that democratic institutions are conducive to interpersonal social trust, as well as this trust being conducive to democracy" (Inglehart 1999, p.104). In this case, it is the presence of a democratic context, wherein the state performs its guardian role and where rights and rules are enforced, which permits the creation of useful social capital by providing the conditions and the setting for social activity - most specifically political activity - to occur.

It is my view that a political party is a source of social capital as it allows individuals to coordinate, through their norms and procedures, their otherwise disparate forces in order to advance shared interests. Parties arise out of a need for civic expression; that is, people create parties because they are the most suitable instruments for expressing their political views and making their demands eligible for public policy (Sartori 1976, 28). Furthermore, they also organize civic activity through their political platforms, by providing key information to society members about the different choices and alternatives of political direction. Through their internal norms and processes (interest aggregation and articulation, and recruitment of political leadership) these political organizations impart useful political skills, such as negotiation and political knowledge, as well as important values such as tolerance and collective consciousness. It is also through participating in these processes and other party activities that members get the opportunity to establish relationships of acquaintance and familiarity, which allow for cooperation to occur and trust to emerge. Hence, inasmuch as we have examined them so far, parties act according to Putnam's idea of social capital; that is, they act as networks of civic engagement that allow for social forces to come together to achieve collective desired goals.

In the absence of democratic conditions, however, I would hesitate to call this kind of trust "useful" for democracy. In an undemocratic environment parties are more likely to function according to Sartori's (1976) idea of factions[6], political groups organized around particular objectives. These groups generate interpersonal trust, but this trust is created along "particular and exclusionary lines" (Whittington 2001, 31) since the lack of law

[6] According to Sartori (1976), factions are groups where the idea of " national interests [...] are made subordinated to particular interests" (6)

enforcement in a weak state does not allow members to cooperate with or trust outsiders[7]. In other words, this kind of group tends to generate the bonding and exclusionary kind of social capital that Putnam described as non-useful for democratic advancement. Regarding this point, Whittington (2001) explains that social capital must be placed within a "political and institutional context" since "without [...] attention to political institutions social capital may well be directed against other members of society" (31). In a democratic environment, factions are forced to become parties in order to achieve their goals, which mean, in Sartori's words, "becoming a part of a whole [...] a pluralistic whole"[8] (26). According to Sartori, the presence of a democratic context, where "the constraints of the system are operative", obliges parties to serve the benefit of the whole community, and not solely the benefit of their members (25). Therefore, as political civic networks, parties are more likely to promote participation- civic engagement, and civic norms such as collective consciousness, tolerance, and cooperation, in a democratic system that provides them a clear framework for action and instils in its members a sense of social trust.

3.2. James Coleman: *Relational Resources*

For James Coleman (1990), social capital is comprised of all the social resources that emerge from relationships among individuals and serve them in achieving their ends (300). He explains social capital as "social-structural resources [which become a] capital asset for the individual [as] they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure" (302). Different than the view examined in the previous section, which is concerned with how associational activity can enhance the collective welfare, Coleman's

[7] This idea is based in Whittington's argument about the dangers of an unmonitored civil society.
[8] [Which is able to] take a non-partial approach to the whole [and] capable of governing for the sake of the whole (26)

rational choice perspective is focused on how social relations can produce useful resources for achieving collective or particular goals. For Coleman, rational individuals engage in "social exchanges", or social relations, because they are interested in gaining control over events "that are fully or partially under the control of other actors, [which brings as a result] the formation of social relations having some persistence over time" (300). Based on this idea, the author explains that these continual social exchanges served to establish the social structures that social capital itself comes from (300), understanding social structure as any social unit – for example families, communities, nations - in which individuals interact (29, 300). Thus, in this functionalist approach, social capital is conceived as the resources *(obligations and expectations, information potential, authority relations, effective norms/sanctions, appropriable social organizations*) that result from the social relations and exchanges, which occur within a social structure. According to this notion, every social network, including political parties, can be regarded as a source of social capital, as they are all built on the idea of providing their members the resources needed to advance their particular and collective purposes. I consider that political parties fit with Coleman's theory, as these political structures not only create resources that facilitate action for actors that are within the structure (i.e. party members and elites), but may also produce useful by-products for the entity in which they exist, namely society at large (311-2)[9].

3.2.1 Obligations and Expectations:

[9] For Coleman, social relations/exchanges constitute sources of social capital not only because of their intended purpose (to create resources for attaining a goal), but especially because of their unintended consequences: "A major use of the concept of social capital depends on its being a by-product of activities engaged in for other purposes" (312).

Coleman starts his account by talking about "obligations and expectations" as a social capital resource that emerges from the actors' calculated decisions to engage in social exchanges for the purpose of collecting future benefits from these relations (306-310). He explains that in the case of "obligations and expectations", this resource represents social capital as favours become credit slips (by credit slips we mean obligations which are expected to bear profits, namely needed resources) when redeemed (309-10). In the case of rational individuals, they will purposely do unrequited favours during times when these favours will not cost them much, in order to accumulate social capital in the form of obligations of reciprocity (309). Within the party structure there are many examples that show the creation of obligations of reciprocity, one of the most obvious being the obligation of party elites to their membership. Party leaders are well aware of the fact that members donate their time and money to the party because they are anticipating a return for their contributions, whether that means gaining opportunities to further their own political careers, or seeing desired political changes come to fruition (Uslaner 2004, 13; Strom 1990, 576-8). Politicians know that they are compelled to fulfil their membership demands; to ignore these expectations may cost them followers, as well as financial support for future elections (Walton and Eldersveld 2000, 301[10]). Another example is that of patronage, where political leaders use the resources at their disposal to draft key civic players such as business corporations or other influential groups, dispensing favours to these groups and creating in them an obligation to support the party at the next elections[11]. In this case, parties act as rational agents by creating obligations of reciprocity as a kind of "insurance policy", doing favours when they do not cost much and

[10] Jr. Hanes Walton, Samuel J. Eldersveld, Political Parties in America Society 2000

[11] To explain this idea Coleman (1976) uses as an example senators in the US Congress, whose position of power allows them to purposefully create obligations of reciprocity from others (308).

claiming the repayment when it is dearly needed (Coleman 1976, 310). Even when this social capital resource is created with the purpose of benefiting those directly involved in the exchange (namely the party leaders and members), the presence of democratic conditions[12] makes them dependent upon votes, and so they are compelled to ask electors for their support. Hence, the nature of political parties in a democracy places them in a situation where they have obligations of reciprocity not only toward their members, but also to the electorate. This is especially true for parties in government since people expect the party to fulfill its promises once it gains power (Keman 2006, 171[13]; Ware 1996, 317-8). Thus, the presence of democratic conditions increases parties' likeliness to produce social capital, as it forces them to create obligations of reciprocity that are useful for society, in the form of electoral promises that must be honoured to repay the political support received from the citizens.

When examining obligations and expectations, Coleman (1976) notes that one important condition for the materialization of this kind of capital is "the level of trustworthiness of the social environment, which means that obligations will be repaid" (306). In a democracy, this environment of trustworthiness is created through democratic mechanisms such as competitive elections, which serve to make parties dependent on public support (van Biezen, 2004 10; Katz and Mair 1995, 11; Random Hershey 2006, 78). Elections are mechanisms for enforcing political accountability, and politicians are aware that political campaigns create expectations about the party's future performance (Katz 1980, 19; Rahn and Brehm 1997). To disregard these electoral promises will create dissatisfaction and a loss of voters' trust, which will ultimately harm the party in question

[12] E.g. constitutional norms, elections and electoral laws, and strong judicial institutions.
[13] Keman asserts that this idea is derived from mandate theory, which "assumes that voters expect parties to fulfill their promises once they are in office" (171).

by decreasing their public support at upcoming elections (Ibid; also in Magalhaes 2006, 197).

It is at this point that party elites face the complex task of balancing their internal and external obligations of reciprocity. In designing their policy agendas parties must aim to maintain ideological coherence and strengthen their political base. However, they must also be aware of the pressing issues that concern society at large, which sometimes requires that they revise old approaches and shift the order of their priorities (Kinglemann et al 1994, 29)[14]. The effectiveness of policy agendas in reconciling these demands will depend on factors such as a party's financial resources, institutional strength, and type of organization (e.g. catch all, cadre, mass party), all of which may influence a party's goals as well as its "room for manoeuvre" in negotiations[15].

3.2.2. Information Potential

It is through the creation of policy agendas and platforms that parties realize another important social capital resource, that of "information potential". For Coleman, social relations produce social capital because they provide information that facilitates action (310). Since acquiring information itself requires time and attention, individuals may use their social networks to gain such knowledge with less effort (Ibid.). On the surface it may seem difficult to apply this argument to the case of parties, since the media and other organizations may provide individuals with enough political information,

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[14] According to Kinglemann's (1994) "Salience Theory", parties do not discard old issues from their policy agendas, since to do this will likely alienate their former membership. Instead, parties select from among all the old and current issues those which will be placed in the political platform.

[15] Other important factors include the institutional constraints established by electoral laws and constitutional norms, which will determine the nature of the party system, as well as how i.e. the legislative process, and by whom , i.e. political and social actors, decisions will be made (Powell 1990). At last, events in the international arena are also relevant for policy making, since the effects of such events may produce constraints as well as opportunities for parties to further their policy goals.

without the individuals ever having to attend party meetings. Of course, there is the case of particular citizens who may join parties for the personal purpose of networking with influential people who may offer them information about potential career or financial opportunities, but the information potential derived from these relations can hardly be considered useful social capital for democratic, activity. Nonetheless, when looking at society as a large network, it is possible to see how party structures, and the relations that develop within them, produce information potential that helps society to formulate political action. At the society level, parties are sources of information in that, as per their ideological stands, they interpret and rationalize political events and issues that concern society, and thus provide the public with an explanation for such happenings (John Guy 1995, 365). This party-generated information gives people valuable knowledge with which to both understand political reality, and to weigh future decisions. Different than media and other organizations, parties do not only "transmit the information", but they observe and analyze political events and processes, translating these complex scenarios into a clearer form that can be more readily understood by the masses. Indeed, even when the media may interpret such happenings, political parties, as agencies entangled in the web of the state[16] (Lipset and Lakin 2004, 69), are the only entities that have the vision to provide accurate predictions on how such events may affect government and the governed[17].

In a democratic context, one of the most valuable functions of a party is that of transmitting information from the people to the government. Giovanni Sartori (1976) states,"[Parties] are an instrument, or an agency, for representing the people by expressing

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[16] As ruling and opposition parties. Understanding that parties are competing for people's vote, they have an especial interest in providing information, whether are advances in the current policy or critics to the current government, in order to gain the support of the masses.

[17] In that sense, it is possible to see society benefiting from having loose ties with parties, as they process political information and make it available for people to use it.

their demands [...] they did not develop to convey to the people the wishes of the authorities, but far more to convey to the authorities the wishes of the people" (27). Sartori admits that parties do not always perform this function and in some instances, for example in an authoritarian government or single party state, they actually can also do the reverse, transmitting information from the authorities to the people. However, the author maintains that as polities advance toward more democratic terms of participation and inclusion, and people demand for more responsive governments, parties will eventually adopt a more representative role. For him, governments are able to be "responsive [...] because parties suppl[y] the channels for articulating and implementing the demands of the governed" (27). Marjorie Randon Hershey, in her article "Political Parties as Mechanisms of Social Choice" (2006), suggests that the informative function of political parties is also essential for democracy, as it reduces "information costs" (76). Hershey explains "affiliating with a party lets a candidate offer potential supporters a means of reducing their information costs: knowing [the party of the candidate] permits the citizen to infer a series of conclusions about [his] policy stands and general approach to public life" (Ibid. also in McDonald 1971). In that sense, parties are indeed a valuable source of political information, as they allow for citizens to acquire the knowledge needed for formulating action, whether that means expressing criticism, voting, or engaging in activism. It also serves the state as it supplies the government with information about a variety of views and issues that wouldn't be able to come up without parties' social crosscutting structure

3.2.3. Authority Relations

In the case of "authority relations", Coleman explains that as members of the group willingly transfer the rights of control for certain actions to a specific individual, (s)he becomes endowed with the power to act on behalf of his/her group members (311). In this case, the individual obtains social capital in the form of leadership, as once the group accepted him/her as a leader, he/she has the power to direct the group and utilize its collective assets. However, even when it appears as if the leader solely benefits from this transfer of power, Coleman further shows that it is indeed the group who benefits most from this exchange. The author states, "the very concentration of these rights [of control] in a single actor increases the total social capital by overcoming [...] the free rider problem experienced by individuals with similar interests but without a common authority" (Ibid). Thus, the authority relation constitutes a social capital resource for the group, as it designates to particular individuals the responsibility of advancing the group's ideas and acting in their collective interests.

In the case of parties, this power of authority is invested in an elite group who are usually party executives and officials. The party elite constitutes a resource for the group as it facilitates coordination of collective action, reducing the total amount of direct participants, and thus the amount of time and resources spent in decision-making. At this point, it is important to emphasize that the voluntary character of these organizations presents them with different challenges when gathering and organizing their internal forces. One of the biggest issues is the recruitment of members. Parties like any other voluntary association, face the problem of "free-riding", which makes it difficult to find people committed to perform the tasks (Ware 1976, 86). Furthermore, Robert Michels (1959) explains that even when there may be enough people committed to work at a

collective endeavour, the completion of such an endeavour is jeopardized by the fact that a large number of participants can complicate decision-making (25-6, also in Schattschneider 1942). It is for these reasons that parties, in order to avoid this problem and organize efficiently their resources, establish a structure of representation. This representation then becomes a resource for the group, as the presence of delegates makes it possible to expedite the process of decision-making and the implementation of action (Michels 1959, 27).

At this point, it is clear that parties qualify as producers of "authority relations", as they concentrate the decision-making power from all members into a few actors, the party elite, who then become the coordinators of collective action. The significance of these "authority relations" resource, though, is better appreciated when looking at the function that party elites perform in a democracy. If we consider democracy as per Lipset and Lakin's (2004) minimalist view, "[a system] of political rights that specifies how leadership should be designated at the highest national level in a polity" (19), then democracy is nothing but a system to create "authority relations" between the society and its leaders. As elections are the mechanism by which people transfer their "rights of control" to their leaders, and parties are the organizers of this process, party elites then becomes the mediators in the "authority relations" between the citizens and the government. Marjorie Randon Hershey states that democracies "need to recruit leaders as well as voters" (79), and it is this "recruitment" function where parties and most specifically party elites come into play.

Among the different activities of the party elite, there are two that are important when observing party influence over this democratic process[18]: assembling of the polls of electoral candidates and the creation of incentives to mobilize the electorate (Schattschneider 1942, 49-50). On the subject of assembling candidates' polls, one of the most important areas of the influence of party elites is the recruitment and nomination of candidates. Despite the fact that there are legal restrictions (e.g. constitutions and electoral laws) and cultural factors that influence eligibility criteria (Norris 2006), there is no doubt that party elites still exert great power in the process of candidates nomination. Susan Scarrow (1994) and Lars Bille (2001)[19] confirm this notion, as their studies show that even when pressure for more participation within parties has increased in the last decades "central elites continue exerting influence over nomination procedures by preserving veto powers" (Scarrow 1994, 46). Alan Ware (1996) elaborates this idea when he explains that the elites' influence in recruitment and nomination processes may extend from the laying down of general rules of procedure (such as certification, or electorate composition) to vetoing a choice of candidates (262-3; Norris 2006, 93). Elites also exert influence by designing electoral campaigns. Even when most of the campaign success may rely on the candidate's appeal (Norris 2006, 95), elites perform a vital role in this process as they are in charge of devising the material, purposive, or solidarity incentives[20] by which to

[18] There are, of course, other scenarios where this influence is observable, such as the party's legislative activity. However, I consider elections to be one of the most important examples, since it illustrates a more explicit link between the elite, party activity, and the electorate

[19] Lars Bille, in his study on nomination procedures in Western European countries, suggests that even when pressure on parties to increase membership participation in nomination procedures increased after Second World War, "most parties had experienced little change in levels of (…) participation [for] decision-making in the candidate selection process" (2001, 70, as cited in Norris 2006, 92).

[20] Material incentives are those tangible benefits such as money, jobs, and contracts that provide immediate benefits to those who participate in the activity. Solidarity incentives such as recreational and social activity intended to satisfy members' needs for socialization. Purposive incentives, such as ideology and public

motivate members to donate their personal time for the party (Ware 1996, 115). Moreover, elites more than any of the other members, are in a much better position to find resources for the party, since their position of authority makes it easier for them to establish relations of cooperation with other key players who can provide other important resources[21] (Keith Legg 1972, 9-10)[22]. It is this access to outside resources, together with the power to command group forces that allows the elite to exert influence on elections and thus, on society's democratic activity.

3.2.4. Norms and Effective Sanctions:

Despite the fact that elites are invested with such power, this by no means guarantees that they will use it for democratic purposes. There are many examples of party elites using their power to seek personal gain or group benefits at the expense of the citizens. It is for precisely this reason that the social capital resource of "norms and effective sanctions" becomes important in determining whether elite activity is useful for democracy, since it is through norms and restrictions that an individual's behaviour, even that of the elite, is adjusted to meet certain goals. In Coleman's view, norms constitute an important social capital resource because they serve to guide individual actions, whether by encouraging or discouraging certain behaviours (247). To explain this point, I will first look at parties' structure, to see how these internal procedures and codes act as social capital for the group and society, through providing information for taking political action. Consequently, I will also look at external norms such as constitutions and electoral laws,

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policy programs, are directed to attract participants through inspiring them to make a political difference. (Ware 1992, 86)

[21] Also in Putnam 1976, 109, and Ware 1996, 110.

[22] In this particular case, party elites are indeed using the social capital invested in them (leadership) to generate more social capital, by establishing social relations (connections) that are useful in accessing other important resources such as information or material assistance.

which I also consider social capital resources since they regulate society and more specifically party behaviour, ensuring that social and political activity is directed to achieve public oriented goals.

3.2.4.1 Party Norms:

As organizations, parties possess internal norms that regulate their activities, as expressed through their constitutions and bylaws. Party constitutions and bylaws express the purpose and the values of the party, its composition (e.g. committees, executives, delegates), the duties of its representatives and members, and most importantly the procedures for party activity. Despite the fact that every party has different norms, in accordance with their particular ideology and political goals most of these rules are oriented to inculcate in party members values of discipline, organization, and cooperation. Party norms also provide information about the party's institutional structure, stating the roles and duties of its officials, the criteria for selecting these officers, and the procedures for election and demotion them. These norms are a useful resource, because they explain party procedures, as well as the role that participants play in the organization, ensuring that their actions, including those of the elite, are directed toward achieving certain goals. Besides these institutional codes, parties also have other means to enforce members' compliance with party goals. A good example of "positive" reinforcement are the previously mentioned monetary, solidarity, and purposive incentives, which encourage partisans to comply with expected behaviour by offering rewards for good work, such as working for the party. There are also sanctions, which work as "negative" enforcers of party norms by imparting penalties on those whose behaviour counters party purposes. An

example of such sanction would be the demotion of party officials who do not perform according to the party line.

According to these conclusions, parties' internal norms and sanctions constitute social capital in the sense that they allow members to coordinate collective efforts. Nevertheless, the fact remains that elites still hold a great deal of power over internal procedures, and as these organizations are mainly geared towards pursuing a specific political agenda, there is the risk that some of them may attempt to push policies that could affect the national welfare. It is at this point that external regulations, such as those of constitutions and electoral laws, seem to be more important than internal norms in determining the utility of a party's activity in democracy. I do acknowledge that parties' internal norms have important repercussions in how these organizations contribute to democratic progress, as is shown by the current debates on party democratization[23]. Nevertheless, I consider that when evaluating parties as sources of useful social capital for democracy, external norms are more helpful predictors that internal party code, since it is external norms that provide the framework by which parties may create their own codes and procedures. Claus Offe (2006) supports this idea when explaining that political institutions, and most especially constitutional arrangements, "make up the [...] framework of action and orientation, for citizens as well as political elites" (34).

3.2.4.2. Constitutions:

Constitutions are key elements for understanding political activity, as these institutions - besides of preserving the freedoms and civic rights that allow for political

[23] Authors such as Pipa Norris (2006,1985), Lars Bille (2001), Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (1992), consider current democratization on party procedures a important step to improve responsiveness and accountability in parties.

participation[24] - define the norms that control the actions of governments and citizens (Guy 1995, 330) This political instrument regulates government activity by establishing the purposes of the government, the capacities of its branches, and most importantly the means to regulate the behaviour of its officials[25] (Banting and Simeon 1985, 96). According to Bo Li (2000), constitutions can be seen in two ways: as an "employment contracts" and as "commitment devices". Constitutions are "employment contracts" because they explain to potential "employees" (candidates) the responsibilities of their positions, as well as the purpose of their activity. They are also "commitment devices" because they state the people's commitment to follow certain institutional procedures for managing public affairs and resolving social conflicts (¶8). Constitutional norms are useful social capital for democracy in the sense that they regulate each party's behaviour and purpose. Even when campaigns may be directed to address the interests of a specific sector, once in power the responsibilities of government obligate parties to adopt a more inclusive stance in order to meet the "job standards", namely to advance the public good. Constitutional regulations impose a limit to any party's power and agenda, as they require for parties to work for bettering the public welfare, which sometimes implies a re-evaluation of policy priorities, and a change from what were initially group-oriented goals into goals for the public good[26].

3.2.4.3. Electoral Laws:

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[24] Such as those of free speech, freedom of association and religion and right to vote, among others.

[25] E.g. judicial controls check and balance, separation of power, etc.

[26] Although the presence of a constitution does not guarantee that such norms will be observed; however, effective constitutions are essential for liberal democracies as they constrain the window of opportunity for elites to exploit the governed.

Electoral laws as norms are a very useful form of social capital in the sense that they influence political party behaviour by regulating the competition between parties. Electoral laws regulate every aspect of the electoral process, from suffrage requirements and candidacy criteria to administrative procedures such as the campaign regulations, form of the voting ballot, and electoral formula (Johnston and Hansen 2005, 172). These regulations give parties cues for framing their political campaign, and in that sense influence the elites' logistical calculus about electoral strategies. These rules also influence the electorate's behaviour, as it allows the voters to make decisions on how to use their vote effectively. Electoral laws are important for democracy as they give life to electoral systems, establishing the conditions and procedures for parties to compete, as well as the mechanisms by which votes are weighed and allocated within a political system. I also consider elections to be a very useful mechanism that it enforces politicians' compliance with the norms and principles established in the constitution. Votes can be either rewards, in the form of support for parties who have performed accordingly to expectations, or sanctions, as people decide to withdraw their support from those who did not meet the established standards. Thus, by implementing elections, democracies make sure that people possess the means to influence their leaders' behaviour

3.2.5. Appropriable Social Organizations

Lastly, parties also produce social capital in the form of appropriable social organizations, by lending their organizational structure for other social purposes. Coleman explains that organizations that are brought into being to further a particular purpose "can be appropriated for other purposes, constituting important social capital for the individuals who have available to them the organizational resources" (312). Thus, organizations are

not only sources of social capital, but also constitute a social capital resource themselves, as they possess an operational structure and a set of resources "ready to use" that can be borrowed by other society members to promote other social goals. Parties are the best example of such a resource, since their institutional apparatus makes them the ideal instrument through which other civic organizations may channel their different voices. Parties fulfill a social need for representation, as people join them with the purpose of bringing into the public forum their common ideal of governance, as well as to bring attention to their particular issues of concern (Randall, 2006;Vassallo and Wilcox, 2006). In that way, parties are initially organizations created to serve the interests of their members (Coleman… 315). However, parties depend on votes, and because to win votes they must expand their span of attention to address other important social issues, they then become appropriable organizations for all those sectors that do not have a political infrastructure via which to bring their own issues to the political table.

This is mostly obvious in the case of mass parties, which initially came about as an expression of socioeconomic, religious, or ethnic cleavages (see more on Lipset and Rokkan, 1960). These parties, whose electoral strategy was based on giving a political identity to the different sectors of a divided society, suffered a significant setback as the post-war period brought changes in the social and economic organization of society, erasing the sources of their political legitimacy (Burgess 2004, Potgunke 2006, 397). The emergence of new social interests and the dissolving of their sources of electoral strength forced many of these parties to adopt a catchall strategy, diversifying their social ties and approaching emerging interest groups and movements in order to rebuild their electoral base in the new post-war society (Potgunke 2006, 399, 2000; Lawson 1980). These

interactions proved to be beneficial not only for the party, in the sense of electoral support, but also for the emerging social movements, which benefited from parties' political infrastructures, as their own lacked of the organization and operational resources to push their demands. The post war period transformed parties, as it obliged them to open up their political and ideological structure so that new social forces and issues could be expressed and represented under the party umbrella. Nowadays, although there are still many parties who pursue a "no strings attached" strategy, most parties have developed multiple connections with other organizations as a way to elaborate a comprehensive political agenda that speaks for various social and economic concerns.

The relationship between party elites and these different interest groups is an important element in determining the usefulness of parties as appropriable organizations, since the quality of their representational functions is determined by the equilibrium of these relationships (Lipset and Lakin 2004, 125). Potgunke (2006) explains that some of these relations are of an informal nature, where the actors (parties and interests groups) interact under "a common understanding, concerning a broad commonality of interest" (398). In this kind of relationship, both participants are free from the other's influence, and even if the interests of civic groups may not get the quality of representation they may desire, the organization retains a "maximum of autonomy" in deciding how to use their support (Ibid.; also in Burgess 2004, 9). There are also other kinds of ties in which the civic organizations keep a closer involvement with the party. According to Potgunke there is the "corporate relationships" type, in which "collective membership of organizational members in a party, [...] can lead to extensive control of the party by the elites of [these] organizations" (Ibid.). There is also the "clientelism" scenario, where the party, through

means of patronage, takes control over the civic organization and their political agenda (Lipset and Lakin 2004; 80, Hopkin 2006). I understand that this may be a simplistic view of the relations between party and social elites, as every relationship has different levels of interdependence. However, the fact that clientelism and patronage exist at different levels in all these relationships does not render in valid the idea that in a democratic scenario these relationships should encourage debate and mediation, whereby parties' structures serve as a filter to aggregate and organize social interests, articulating them into a coherent policy plan. Thus, parties become a useful social capital resource, as the democratic competition forces them to forge connections with civic society, making the party's infrastructure a mediating device by which social interests may be transformed into political alternatives for governance.

This last point seems pertinent in recalling Coleman's idea of social capital, and how parties as political organizations reflect it. Rational individuals join and create parties with the purpose of gaining control over resources needed to advance their particular goals, whether these are financial, professional, social, or political. By engaging in party activity, people establish the relations of acknowledgment that will allow them to obtain relational resources useful for both party and individual purposes, such as obligations of reciprocity from party leaders or other party members, or vital information needed for attaining a particular goal. They also enjoy benefits in having a leadership who coordinates their actions, saving them time and effort in analysing and deciding on the most effective path of action to achieve their political goals. Finally, these groups possess constitutions and bylaws that provide members with information about the party, its values, and purposes, as well as instructions for political activity.

What is interesting of Coleman's theory is that it looks at social structures benefits not only from the individual perspective, but also from the social perspective. Social structures become useful sources of social capital for society, as through their activity, they unintentionally produce by-products that benefit those outside their boundaries. Parties, more than any other social organization, fit into this idea since their role in society implies that their activities should be oriented toward the public good. In the sense of parties' by-products, platforms and electoral campaigns are useful as they create obligations of reciprocity in the form of electoral promises, generating expectations on future party performance. They also serve as sources of information since they not only transfer political information to the people, but most importantly, they also convey information from the people to the state. When looking at parties' by-products, I consider that one of the most significant is that of coordination of elections, as by organizing electoral campaigns, they facilitate the process by which people transfer "their rights of control" to their leaders. Also parties' constitutions and bylaws are a useful social capital resource, in the fact that they teach citizens in the processes of making politics and in that way facilitate coordination for political action. Finally, the institutions themselves constitute a social capital resource since their representative function makes them the most suitable instruments to mediate among conflicting interests and express the views of those who do not have a voice in the political arena.

After observing Putnam's and Coleman's social capital theories, it is possible to see parties as civic networks/social structures that generate useful resources for social and individual development. From Putnam's collectivist view, we can observe how these political networks contribute to society's political exercise, as they impart important

values such as those of cooperation, tolerance and collective consciousness, which facilitate the coordination of political action. For Coleman, these political structures are producers of social resources that even when originally intended to benefit their members, may end up helping society as a consequence. Both views exalt the goodness of social networks and their resources, as they help individuals to reach their objectives and spill benefits into their surroundings. However, I consider that when looking at social capital the assumption that this social resource is a good per se, leads to a severe misconception. All social networks are able to produce some sort of social capital resources for the profit/enjoyment of the individuals in it. However, when looking at the impact of those networks in society, some of these associations may pursue goals that benefit their members at the expense of the outsiders, creating social capital that is harmful for society. This case is most evident in the absence of democratic institutions, since the lack of such constraints may leave society without a clear idea of its social purpose, allowing groups free reign to go after their particular goals without caring about the negative consequences that this may bring to others. It is at this point that Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of social capital becomes helpful, as his vision of social capital permits us to observe how this resource can be a hindrance for social development.

3.3. Pierre Bourdieu: *Elite and Inequality*

From the critical social theory tradition of Pierre Bourdieu, the unequal distribution of the different types of resources (cultural, financial, symbolic capital) is what brings about the creation of social capital. In this scenario, valuable resources such as knowledge, money, and prestige are unequally distributed among society, and the people who possess most of them build networks as way to increase their own capital. For Bourdieu, social

capital is "the aggregate of the actual, or potential resources, which are linked to the possession of a durable network [...], which provide each of its members with the backing of collective-owned capital" (248-9). In this sense, group membership itself is social capital; as such membership is what provides individuals with access to the group's resources, meaning all the actual and potential goods that are concentrated in the group by virtue of its members. In this social capital scheme, groups emerge out of a need to preserve the members' valuable resources; thus, their activity is oriented so as to impede others from freely enjoying or using these assets.

Since people within these groups realize that in order to increase the value of their personal assets they must join others whose personal resources are equal or greater in value, membership recruitment becomes an instrument that enhances the value of the group. Group members will attempt to preserve and increase their power by creating mechanisms (e.g. rituals and ceremonies) and norms selection criteria, which assist them in screening for those who seem more likely to fit in their prestigious circle. This selection mechanism, while benefiting those within the group, produces negative effects for outsiders since resources are not equally distributed among society; hence, those with more valuable resources will have an advantage over those less fortunate when it comes to group admission. It follows that those who already have power and resources will accumulate more of it, and by denying access to those who do not fit their criteria, they will deprive others of the opportunity to acquire the resources needed to improve their status and living standards. According to Bourdieu's view, social networks are not only able to bring good to society, they are also able to harm those who live outside their

boundaries, as the group's actions may add to and also help to reproduce conditions of social inequality.

Even when it seems very clear that these kinds of associations may cause harmful effects for society, it is also obvious that a democratic society cannot run without the presence of a governing elite, a group of people who concentrate the majority of society's valuable resources and purposely use them to determine the fate of others. Even though the idea of "the elite" may go against the democratic values of equality and inclusiveness, political elites are a necessary condition if democracy is to flourish, since the elite gives members of society the guidance needed to pursue their collective interests. The difference between these governing elites and those groups to which Bourdieu refers is that democracy as a political system allows for those with less power to gain some leverage over the most powerful ones, preventing the latter from purposefully bringing harm upon the former. Even when the political elite may concentrate a great amount of power through money, knowledge, and prestige, these individuals are not free to use such power for their own purposes; instead, they are obliged to employ these resources in creating benefits for the governed. In this subsection I will first look at the concept of the political elite and its role in democratic systems, in order to understand how such a social structure can actually benefit society through advancing democracy. Secondly, since parties are the subjects of this study, I will also explore the nature of parties as sources of the governing elite, observing how leaders' influence in procedures of nomination and selection persist through internal and external democratic pressures. Following, a brief historical review will allow me to observe how party interplay with its changing environment allows it to circumvent democratic conditions, recreating in some cases that harmful type of social

capital noted in Bourdieu's definition above. Finally, I will use Dahl's (1971) Democratic continuum to evaluate party patronage system in terms of democratic development.

3.3.1 Governing Elite and Democracy: The need for organization

According to Andrew Heywood (2000), the term elite "originally meant, and [...] still [means], the highest, the best of the excellence. Used in [an] [...] empirical sense, however, it refers to a minority in whose hands power, wealth or privilege is concentrated, justifiable or otherwise"(167). Vilfredo Pareto (1966) suggested using the title elite "for those people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity" (248), whose knowledge and power allowed them to position themselves above other people in their organization. Another classic definition is that of Gaetano Mosca (1939), who states, "in all societies...two classes of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class always less numerous perform all political functions [...] whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first" (50). Adding to Mosca's idea, Robert Putnam (1959) in his study of political elites, restates that political power, like any other social good, is distributed unequally, and in that way those few who possess it will monopolize it and enjoy the benefits that such power brings[27] (3).

3.3.1.1. The Elite as an Organizing Body

All these interpretations of the term "elite" suggest that a minority, who possesses the knowledge and the resources to exert power, will unite in order to take over the management of the majority. An organized minority, who use their forces in an efficient manner, will always have a greater opportunity to govern a larger, disorganized majority. Indeed, according to elite theorists such as Gaetano Mosca (1939), Vilfredo Pareto (1966), and Robert Michels (1959), this is actually necessary, since a majority left to their devices

[27] This statement is based on Gaetano Mosca's view of the "ruling class".

may not be able to decide - let alone commit - to work for a common good. This is well explained by Robert Michels in his book *Political Parties* (1959), where he explains that in order for a democracy to survive, it requires the presence of a group of capable delegates that can take care of the business of politics. Michels made his point by explaining the impossibility of the masses to govern themselves,

> The sovereign masses are altogether incapable of undertaking the most necessary resolutions [...] it is obvious that such a gigantic number of persons belonging to an unitary organization cannot do any practical work upon a system of direct discussion. [Besides] by parity of reasoning, [...] it is impossible for the collectivity to undertake the direct settlement of all the controversies that may arise. (26-7)

For Michels, democracy - as the government by the demos - is not possible without an organizational structure that can deal with the affairs of everyday politics. Common citizens have neither the time nor the capacity to take on all the issues that appear in the complex setting of society at large. That is why Michels sees delegation as the only means by which democracy can work, as people then hand over to the representatives the duty of carrying out their collective will. Furthermore, he also explains that these delegates must also possess some kind of technical knowledge or expertise in order to understand the complexity behind their leadership responsibilities (28). For this reason he advocates for the creation "of a class of professional politicians, of approved and registered expertise in political life." (29)[28]. It is thus that elites emerge as a necessity for democracy: a group of skilled delegates are entrusted with the duty and the power to act on behalf of those whom they represent, in the process assuming the power of decision-making of each of those

[28] It is important to distinguish here between political leaders and bureaucracy, which also takes part in the managing of political processes. Even when both are significantly important for a democratic system, bureaucrats are mostly responsible for the proper functioning of democratic procedures, making sure that rules are followed, and implementing/executing policies. The most important differences between bureaucrats and politicians are that bureaucrats are not elected by the masses, and they do not have the power to make decisions on behalf of the community; the have power only to implement such decisions.

individuals. Nevertheless, as these representatives gain experience and specialized knowledge, they eventually acquire some sort of autonomy from the represented, as all this expertise gives them precious information and wisdom with which to make some decisions which may not be comprehended by the governed. Michels explains that as individuals perform their representative duties, they develop private interests inherent to their position and the general organization, which eventually leads them to shift their focus from representing other interests, to instead maintaining the structure that gives them power (39-40). Thus, it is the ambition of remaining in power, together with their unique skills of expertise and knowledge that eventually transforms the "servants" into leaders and gives them autonomy from the masses (32, 392).

3.3.1.2. Democratic Elites and the Need for Controls

Although elites are a necessary part of democratic society, it is inherently difficult to associate the ideas of inclusion and equality with them. Looking to the political scheme, it seems that leaders, by virtue of their position and power, are detached from the citizens' control and so are free to serve their own interests. However, the elite's behaviour is restrained in the presence of democratic conditions, which imposes limits to their power and to what they can get away with. The presence of free and competitive elections compels elites to be responsible to the masses. Joseph A. Schumpeter (1959) explains that a democratic method "is that institution for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote"[29] (78). Democratic elections regulate political elites' behaviour, as elections subject elites to the power of the vote, and to the need for re-election. Elected officials are conscious of the fact that their re-election depends on how well they make

[29] Also in Field, Higley and Burton, 1990, 182

decisions and the impact that such decisions may have on society. Hence, even if restricted to the right to vote, democracy offers an instrument for people to influence both policy-making itself, and those who make the policies. Gaetano Mosca (1939) explains that it is through this mechanism of competitive elections that "sentiments and passions of the "common herd" come to have their influence on the mental attitudes of their representatives" making them resonate up to the highest spheres of government" (56).

Other important institutions such as "civil rights", "checks and balances", and "civil society" also have roles in restraining the power of elites. Civil rights - such as the right to personal liberty and the right to vote - together with constitutional clauses that preserve the freedoms of speech, of association, and of the press, among others, are essential for restraining elites' power, as they protect the individuals' right to freely decide whether they wish for these elites to remain in power. Also, the limited autonomy of the individual branches of government, expressed through constitutional checks and balances, is an important instrument for control of the political elite, as each branch oversees the activities of the others and through due legal procedures, they moderate each others' power. Furthermore, there are also the roles played by autonomous organizations of the civil society such as the church, the economic sectors, and the military forces, whose presence helps to counterbalance the power of the governing elite by exerting pressure that curbs the elite's desires (Dahl, 1982). These groups are especially important since they also serve as alternative channels for articulation of social interests, exerting pressure upon the state by bringing attention to particular social issues, and by organizing advocacy for non-political causes. Finally, and foremost, a very important element that serves to regulate the power of the elite is their own self-interest. Elites will be more willing than

the masses to respect and protect democratic values, since it is from these values that they obtain their legitimacy of power. Dye and Zeigler (1996) clearly explain this idea in saying that "The only effective check on irresponsible elite behaviour is their own realization that the system itself will become endangered if such behaviour continues unrestrained" (158). Elites, acting from their own ambition and particular purposes, will attempt to preserve democracy as this is the only political system that gives them legitimate power over others' lives and possessions.

3.3.2. Political Parties as Sources of Leadership: Configuration of the governing elite

The main sources of government elites in a democracy are political parties. These political organizations have the job of producing competent and capable contenders who are able to handle the power and the responsibility that comes with holding public office. Because of their voluntary nature, these organizations are usually very open to people who want to enrol in their ranks and contribute to their cause. However, not all those that enrol are allowed to govern, and through their recruitment mechanisms parties make sure to select from their group only those who can best perform this task. Schumpeter (1954) explained that a requirement for democracy is a high quality leadership, "a social stratum, itself a product of a severely selective process, that takes to politics as a matter of course" (82). Parties help to fulfil this democratic requirement as they take charge of this selection process. As stated before, these political organizations are training camps for future politicians: they educate individuals in the art of politics through creating opportunities that allow them to hone their intrinsic leadership skills and acquire the experience needed to take on official posts. However, not all people who are prepared to take on a leadership role actually get nominated to compete for government positions. Even when parties

produce a great number of suitable candidates, only a few will get selected to compete in public elections. Pipa Norris (2006) suggests this idea when she states that party recruitment "can be seen as a progressive game of 'musical chairs': many are eligible, few are nominated and even fewer succeed" (89).

3.3.2.1. Nomination Processes

There are certain legal and social requisites that candidates must fulfil in order to run for government office. Most basic requirements are defined in constitutions and electoral laws which provide restrictions with regards to age, citizenship, profession, and education of the candidates, and in a more implicit manner, there are also informal social norms and cultural values that shape people's perception of what makes an appropriate nominee (Norris 2006, 81). When it comes to creating political leadership, though, the most important requirements are those established in the process of party nominations. I consider this process to be critical as it involves a series of factors that are paramount in defining the quality of the democratic process, factors such as the party elite, internal democracy, and electoral norms. As leaders of the organization, the main goal of the party elite[10] is the preservation and sustainability of the organization. Being conscious of the impact that nominees have on the public's perception of the party, party leaders create devices that allow them to influence nomination in the hopes that they may secure the power and ensure the survival of the party. Their influence may range from open domination (such as absolute control over the nomination process or the vetoing of candidates) to more subtle methods of manipulation (like the creation of rules and procedures for nominations, for example establishing voting quotas for minorities groups).

[10] Party elites, different to government elites are usually not selected by popular input, but they emerge with the organization, rooting their power in their position within the party structure and not in their election to public office (Ware 1996, 258).

The purpose of these actions is to select candidates that help to enhance the party's public image whose political intelligence and resources can be transformed into support and other benefits for the group. For that reason, besides the basic requirements – university education, age and party membership – the party elite uses more implicit criteria when evaluating candidates, which usually assesses their social status, personal connections, and the compatibility of their political views with those of the elite. Robert Putnam, in his study of political elites (1959) explains that the "law of increasing disproportion" states that elite recruitment always tends to favour people from the upper strata, as these people are able "to convert social and economic resources into political resources" (39). The selection criteria are also oriented to promote homogeneity and consensus within the elite, as the sharing of common backgrounds and social experiences is likely to facilitate interactions among the members of the elite, which result in the coordinating of political action[31] (116).

3.3.2.2. Social and Legal Factors

Despite their significant influence, it is important to note that elites are also subject to social changes and institutional demands. The socioeconomic modernization that came after the Second World War generated significant changes in party structures, as it brought with it greater demands for representation and internal democratization. The emergence of new social forces strengthened civil society's voice and forced parties to pay attention to previously ignored social issues. Furthermore, as social and economic changes calmed some conflicts of social inequality, people started to favour civic organization over political parties, as such organizations allowed them to focus their efforts on smaller causes that provided more tangible results and did not require complete devotion (Ware

[31] Also in Prewitt and Stone (1973)

1996, 258). In the face of declining membership, parties attempted to re-establish their support base by recruiting leaders who could satisfy citizens' increasing needs for more substantial representation, particularly for candidates who not only reflected the characteristics of the social group that they represented, but who also voiced and acted on the multiple interests of such groups. The need to attract members also led party elites to expand the size of internal selectorates in order to entice apathetic citizens into joining the party ranks. These moves for decentralization of party decision-making were mainly oriented to satisfy party members' demands for inclusiveness, and to allow local branches to fulfil electoral considerations for local representation (Hazan and Rahat 2006, 114; Siavelis 2006, 364).

Another important factor that curtails the elite's power is electoral law. Electoral rules influence party nomination procedures by determining the level of responsiveness of party candidates. Elected representatives are expected to be more responsive to their constituencies in systems where most positions of government office are open for competition. Also, electoral systems with open list ballots are likely to encourage a candidate's responsiveness to their constituency, because in this situation it is easier for people to identify exactly who the candidates are that are competing for the positions (Hazan and Rahat 2006, 105). These socioeconomic changes, combined with effective legal mechanisms, brought a greater sense of inclusion in the overall electoral process, effectively curtailing the party elite's power to control nominations. Despite the fact that the party elite still has substantial power, the decentralization and now-inclusive character of the electoral procedures constitutes a significant step toward party democratization. The spreading of power among party members, even if only toward the level of the local elite,

certainly allows for a greater level of accountability of candidates, which then increases the credibility and quality of political participation in general.

Before ending, I would like to state that these inclusive approaches, although beneficial for democracy, also present serious constraints on party activity. These strategies may be detrimental to party structure as the inclusion of new activists and interests can conflict with the party's original values, thus threatening to dissolve the loyal core of party activists. Measures resulting in decentralization and the increase of responsiveness to constituents may also bring up issues regarding coordination of party strategies, as candidates who are accountable to locals may attempt to bypass party commands and thus hamper party strategy (Hazan and Rahat, 115, Deschouver 2006).

3.3.2.3. Governing Elite Configuration and Circulation of the Elite

Through this analysis thus far, it is possible to see how parties engender political elites and how internal and external conditions may affect their configurations. Even when party elites still have enough power to turn elite recruitment in their favour, complete domination from the party elite is rare in current democracies. (Ware 2004, 365) Most importantly, social and political changes that occurred after the Second World War prompted upward mobility, as party shifts toward increasing representation also allowed minority groups and other previously ignored social sectors to position their own representatives for the electoral race. This notion is related to Vilfredo Pareto's (1935) idea of "circulation of the elite", where openness in the system allows for new forces to join the governing elites. In the words of Pareto, "the governing class is restored not only in numbers, but - and that is the more important thing - in quality, by families rising from the lower classes and bringing with them the vigour and the [capacity] for keeping

themselves in power" (2026). For the author, upward mobility is the means for elites to renew their forces and stay in power, as talented and ambitious individuals from the masses join the group. In that sense, effective political representation from the different social sectors may stimulate governing elite's renewal, as new leaders bring innovative political ideas and a more accurate view of social issues[32]. Despite these facts, reality appears more kin to Bourdieu's theory than to the ideals of democracy. Differing from Pareto's principle, obstacles such as wealth and connections interfere with the free mobility of individuals throughout the political ranks, so that those wearing the label of "elite" and those actually possessing the highest capacity and skill tend to diverge to greater or lesser degrees.

3.3.3. Parties, Patronage, and Social Change: The dark side of social capital

Even when social and political developments have made inroads with respect to democratizing party structure, reality remains very different from the political ideal. More often than not, it seems that parties that gain control of the state and its resources tend to use their power to increase their influence and prevent others from accessing government resources of all kinds. In the view of party elites, the recruitment of political leaders and civil servants is mostly intended to facilitate this process, as they recruit people that are capable of expanding the party's spectrum of power through establishing relations of clientelism and patronage with valuable clients.

According to Jonathan Hopkin's study of clientelism and party politics (2006), all electoral actions are based on exchange behaviour, whether involving ideological support or material resources, which implies that there is always a certain degree of clientelism

[32] These demands for representation have also permeated into party cadres, as there are more internal elections for high party offices. However, in this case influences of the party elite are even greater as their input is highly regarded for the choosing of their successors.

present. Hopkins distinguishes between the two types of clientelism: "old clientelism", which is based on patron-client relationships, and "new clientelism" where clients are more independent from their patrons and "shop around for the patron who offers the best deal" (407). He explains that in the old clientelist system power is found in the local bosses, who use their influence over their groups as a bargaining chip, exchanging the group's votes for potential goods and services (409). In the "new clientelism", however, the patron is the party organization, which uses its access to state resources to subject local elites to their command and manipulate the dispensing of benefits in its favour (Ibid). Despite social changes and advances in political rights, these practices of clientelism and patronage have managed to persist over time, with practitioners adapting their services to the demands of their different clients. The following paragraphs illustrate how party clientelistic mechanisms have survived through significant democratic advances, evolving into a more complex structure of political domination and exclusion whose effects on democracy are displayed in different degrees.

3.3.3.1. Cadre Parties: Old clientelism and notable elites

The "old clientelist" practices are mostly related to the former cadre parties that existed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when suffrage requirements limited political participation to the small group of wealthy and prestigious men that belonged to the highest social echelons of society (Duverger 1954; Katz and Mair 1995, 9; Krouwel 2006, 253). In this system, those individuals who belonged to prestigious circles used their connections and resources to configure their own political groups, which were mainly intended to bring their demands to the state. Parties, being poorly organized structures, consequently contacted these local bosses and exchanged patronage benefits for their

respective votes. Although parties originally referred to these local nobles for support, in effect they were merely pursuing exactly the same interests, those being the interests of the higher classes. Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (1995) describe these parties as "committees of those people who jointly constituted both the state and civil society" (9). This system exposes a structure of exclusion and political inequality, as only those belonging to the privileged classes could bring their demands and interests to the attention of the state. However, with the advent of industrialization and the extension of suffrage rights, political participation increased and so did the demand for policies whose benefit expanded from the small cadre to the rest of the electorate. New political parties emerged with the ideal of changing the current political structure to reflect society's diversity of sectors and demands. These new parties developed outside of parliament and relied on numerical strength rather than social and political influence, coordinating scant collective resources in an efficient manner in order to compete against the wealthy elite and to promote their own ideals.

3.3.3.2. Mass Parties: Party bosses and new clientelism

Social and economic evolution brought into being a new form of political organization: the mass party. The emergence of mass-parties represented an important change in the political arena, as parties became a more structured and stronger force in state politics. These organizations were able to surpass the power of local elites by espousing an ideology that voiced the views and demands of the larger, disenfranchised population, whose collective participation contributed greatly in terms of labour and financial resources (Hopkins 2006, 408; Duverger 1954). These new political institutions also brought about significant progress in democratic politics; what were formerly

organizations that promoted only the welfare of the powerful few, eventually expanded in their social and political capacity to instead represent the whole. The new mass party model was useful for democracy as it allowed a greater political inclusion from the masses as well as an increase in political equality.

However, the new and more inclusive political structure also resulted in a replacement of the old social strata with a new ideological cadre, which brought with it its own forms of clientelism. Mass parties created a system of clientelism based on the power of the organization, wherein political leaders outside of government were as powerful as, if not more powerful than those in the official seats. This party leader's power was mainly based on a political ideology that addressed the ideals and wants of the different social cleavages, mobilizing the forces of multiple and unrepresented social segments (Krouwel, 2006, Duverger 1954). Although their main appeal was their ideological content, these leaders also made use of other forms of material and social incentives for the purpose of recruiting members and reinforcing their political power. Party resources came originally from members' donations and labour, but eventually the state also became an important donor, as partisan government officials directed their activity to enforce the influence of the organization (Hopkin 2006, 409). Thus, even when the new party system brought significant progress in inclusion and political representation, it still presented equality issues, as the amount of power concentrated in the hands of party leaders allowed them to select which issues would be brought to the negotiating table, usually excluding those non-related with party ideals.

3.3.3.3. The Catch-all Party: Clientele diversification and pragmatic politics.

Despite their increasing membership and strong ideological hold, mass parties suffered a setback after the end of the Second World War, as introduction of the welfare state and increasing economic growth blurred what were once clear social divisions. The improvement of economic conditions, technological advances, and emergence of new interests unrelated to the original purpose of class struggle, all forced parties to exchange their ideological rhetoric for more pragmatic policies in an attempt to appeal to the new social forces and restore their membership base. Furthermore, parties in government became more dependent on state resources, as social and economic changes weakened membership commitment and contributions. Otto Kirchheimer (1964) suggests that catch-all parties designed a more practical form of clientelism wherein the party, liberating itself from ideological dogma, decided to go for a more open approach that allowed them to make more collective appeals and expand patronage networks.

This opening of party procedures also brought important changes to party structure. As parties accommodated a diverse membership, demands for more representative candidates and requests for more active participation began to emerge. Party elites realized that in order to retain their power they would actually have to give some power back to the local branches so that the locals might create strategies to attract and retain members. This move toward a more inclusive structure and active partisanship represented a significant opportunity for both rank-and-file members and for new social leaders whose connections attracted novel forces and resources to the party (Katz and Mair 1995, 13). These moves toward party decentralization and greater participation resonated not only within the party but also at the governmental level, bringing the implementation of electoral processes that decentralized power at the regional and local

levels. Interest groups and civic organizations also became key players in this new system, as these associations concentrated an important amount of support in the form of activists' votes, and used their numerical power in pressuring parties to advance their objectives. In this scenario, party leaders act as brokers, and their organizations are the recipients of the different interests present in a multifaceted society. Here, the purpose of party activity is to create pragmatic policies that allow the government to deliver goods and services, customized to their electors' demands (Krouwel 2006).

The combination of new social forces and advances in electoral politics helped to enhance democracy in regards to competition and inclusion, by giving local leaders a greater autonomy from national party elites and thus encouraging a greater responsiveness to local electors. However, these changes also affected parties' behaviours, bringing back some of the features of the "old patronage" model. Government elites started to rely more on state resources, selecting among their clients' interests in order to create the combination of resources that would yield the maximum votes with a minimum loss (Kirchheimer 1964, Krouwel 1999). As demands from the new clientele were more diverse, and sometimes even incompatible, this situation created tension between party leaders and government officials, as they struggled to decide which among the many different interests should be addressed. Furthermore, advances in media and mass communication generated a change in governing elites' behaviour, as government officials used their popularity to gain autonomy against party elite's power (Panebianco 1988, 266). As governing elites became autonomous from party elites, they were able to use state resources in the hiring of professional policy makers, who were more adept at creating policies that assured the leader for a chance for re-election. These leaders also used their

power over the state as a resource for clientelism, creating patronage appointments for those people who supported them during the campaign and placing their collaborators in key positions.

Following these arguments, it is possible to assert that catch-all parties represented a more advanced model of democracy, in the sense that increased inclusiveness not only in participation from citizens, but also in political representation as decentralization processes generated more responsible leaders. Nevertheless, even in the presence of democratic advancements, patronage mechanisms persisted, resembling at times the "old clientelism" model as it reduced the power of the party elites and allowed governing leaders to use the resources at their disposal to create patronage relations favourable to their personal interests (re-election). However in this updated "old clientelism" scenario, clientele demands interact with external pressures and political regulations, creating a new environment of limitations, as well as opportunities, for the governing elite.

3.3.3.4. The Cartel Party and State Patronage

Although decentralization and increasing the leadership's autonomy from party structure should both lead to greater competition, there are cases where instead of political independence, governing elites develop an intensive dependence on the state. Katz and Mair (1995) suggest that as parties progressively entrench themselves in the structure of the state, they eventually become detached from social ties and become more like agents of the state, linking their operational structure with that of the state offices (17). Katz and Mair explain that as the catch-all party infiltrates and enmeshes itself with state agencies, a new kind of party arises: the "cartel party". In this system, there is not real party competition: all parties, in an attempt to survive, will implicitly agree to share the use of

state resources and will join forces to resist challenges from new political actors. Katz and Mair explain, "The state, which is invaded by the parties, becomes a fount of resources [...] in this sense, it becomes an institutionalized structure of support, sustaining insiders while excluding outsiders" (1995, 16). In this scenario parties, from acting as the brokers of the different social sectors, transform into sub-entities of the state, using government agencies as offices for party patronage. In this scenario, different than the catch-all party scenario, parties do not necessarily compete over policy or social interests, as their main objective is maintaining the status quo and retaining shared power of the state. In the cartel party, local elites become again subjected to the power of the governing elite, and the whole state apparatus turns into a patronage machine.

In countries with cartel parties, these organizations make extensive use of patronage appointments in order to take over the structure of the state, appointing party loyalists in most of the official positions, and doing so without affording opportunity to candidates outside the governing coalition. Donatella della Porta (2004) explains that as political parties infiltrate all layers of the public service, it eliminates bureaucratic efficiency and impartiality, as appointed civil servants are compelled to put their party commitment above their professional ethic (225). In a cartel party system, parties and governing elites converge in the purpose of welding the party to the state, seizing state offices and resources while at the same time using the state's power to regulate political activity and eliminate any possible threats (Katz, 1996).

Katz and Mair state that this process is more likely to develop in countries with traditions of inter-party cooperation, state subsidy to party activity, and especially a lack of legal enforcement and bureaucratic impartiality (17, also in della Porta, 2004, 227).

Bonnie Field (2004) suggests that in an environment of pacted democratic transition, party elites are expected to play an important role in the process of nominating candidates, as well as in the allocation of state resources. The author explains, "pacting elites need to count on party executive committees, governmental appointees, and parliamentary groups that support (or not oppose) their actions" (11). State subsidy also comes into play as an ingredient in patronage and cartel behaviour, as parties that benefit from state subsidy will look to preserve this resource and create alliances with governing elites in order to maintain its supply. In the case of parties in government, they will naturally encourage state subsidies as they help to strengthen the power of their organization and to control other political institutions through relations of patronage. in order to keep them under their control (Ibid, 16). In regard to legal constraints, della Porta states that in countries where party organization penetrates all branches of government, division of power is almost inexistent and laws are manipulated by the party, through their partisan officials.. The author expresses that without the legal controls that regulate political activity and prevent corrupt exchanges from happening, the legitimacy of the political system will eventually erode because citizens will lose trust in the government and its agents (204).

This intensive patronage system suggests the possibility of another transformation in party structure, which brings along with it a more dangerous form of patronage that mixes features of the "new" and "old" clientelism. It resembles the "new clientelism" system in the sense that in this patronage system, instead of individuals referring to state branches and intermediate agents, they will go directly to party leaders in order to facilitate transactions and resolve grievances. However, even when patronage relations are more personalized, they also feature "old clientelism" practices since parties, as part and

owner of the state, become the entities that authorize the provision of goods and services. In these circumstances, patron-client relationships develop into a structure that is outside the framework of democratic and legal norms, creating its own rules, and connecting clients and patrons in asymmetrical relations of dependence and exploitation.

3.3.3.5 Patronage, Democracy and Social Capital

After this brief historical review, it should now be possible to see how patronage and clientelism have survived in the midst of advances in democracy. Even though there has been some evolution of patronage exchanges, which led to a larger and more diverse clientele, it has been well illustrated how parties still stray from democratic parameters by finding new methods of preserving their power.

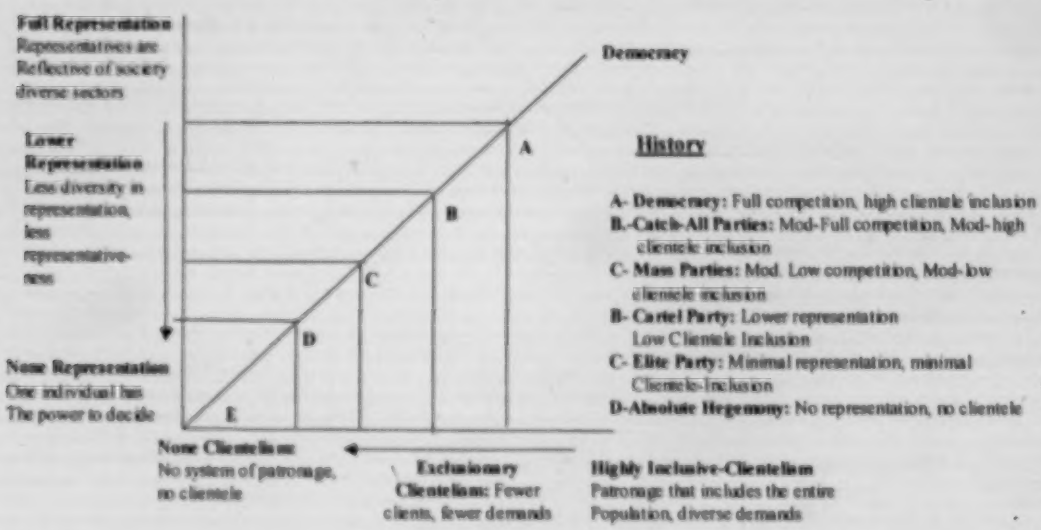
At this point, I would like to use Dahl's (1971) democratic continuum (6) in order to assess the place of these political systems in the democratic continuum, with democracy being the highest system with regards to political representation and inclusion of clientele, and absolute hegemony being the lowest in both categories. (Figure 1). At the democratic top of this continuum there is also a full implementation of democratic conditions, which provides guidance and controls for useful parties activity. These democratic conditions can be summarized into six basic elements:

1. Individuals' rights and freedoms
2. Constitutions that preserves these civil rights and provides guidelines for political action,
3. A strong state that enforces these constitutional norms
4. An autonomous bureaucracy

5. A strong civil society whose power even when not equal to that of the state, helps to counterbalance its power, and finally,
6. Institutions such as electoral institutions and laws that guarantees transparency in electoral procedures and ensure accountability from the government to the people

These conditions are an essential ingredient for full representation and inclusion to occur. Thus, as we go down the continuum, it is likely that the enforcement of these conditions will diminish, going from a full implementation, to deficient and finally to a nonexistent stage.

Figure 1. Patronage Systems in the democratic continuum
Based on Robert Dahl's Graph "Dimension of Democratization" (1971, 6)


Full Representation
Representatives are Reflective of society diverse sectors
Lower Representation
Less diversity in representation, less representative-ness
None Representation
One individual has The power to decide
Democracy
A
B
C
D
E
History
A- Democracy: Full competition, high clientele inclusion
B.-Catch-All Parties: Mod-Full competition, Mod-high clientele inclusion
C- Mass Parties: Mod. Low competition, Mod-low clientele inclusion
B- Cartel Party: Lower representation Low Clientele Inclusion
C- Elite Party: Minimal representation, minimal Clientele-Inclusion
D-Absolute Hegemony: No representation, no clientele
None Clientelism: No system of patronage, no clientele
Exclusionary Clientelism: Fewer clients, fewer demands
Highly Inclusive-Clientelism Patronage that includes the entire Population, diverse demands

In Dahl's polyarchy continuum we could place democracy at the highest point, as a system where electoral processes revolve around packages of collective goods, which are designed to satisfy the demands of the different social sectors (high clientele-inclusion). This system counts with institutional constraints that limit party behaviour and electoral procedures are oriented to produce a maximum of political representation (highly

competitive). Going down the continuum, we will find the catch-all party system, which provides a high level of contestation, as it allows for local forces to participate in electoral race, but party elites remain exerting a great deal of power in nomination procedures (moderated-high competitive). In these systems, even when institutional constraints are put in place and there is a high degree of responsiveness - the system still allows for local elites to develop patronage relations useful to their particular purposes (moderated-high, clientele-inclusion). Following down in the line, it there are the mass parties, whose mass ideological approach promoted political mobilization, but with limited representation. In this system institutional constraints and electoral mechanism are in place, but are not fully developed. This allows for party leaders to control nominations (moderated-low contestation) and exert a great deal of power in the provision of patronage goods, by selecting which interests will be represented (moderated-low clientele-inclusion).

Following closely is the cartel party system, in which institutional constraints are nominal and parties have almost absolute control of the state. In this system there is not much contestation, as parties control nominations and even when they may differ slightly in their views, they will join forces when it comes to preventing outside political groups from taking power (low competition). As there are low levels of representation, there are also low levels of inclusion in regards to patronage, since parties will only provide goods in a selective manner, for purposes of controlling social forces (low clientele- inclusion). At the lower point of the continuum we find cadre parties, where institutional constraints to party behaviour are not established and the privileged elite have absolute control over party representatives. In this scenario, there is a very low level of competition since elites are very much alike in regards to behaviours and goals (minimal contestation), and

patronage goods are limited to those few who have the resources and the influence to participate in politics (minimal clientele inclusion). The final point in the scale will be for absolute hegemonic systems, where only one person has the power of decision and there is no competition for power. There is also no clientele in the sense that the only interests that are satisfied are those of the person in power.

It is important to note here that this adaptation of Dahl's continuum is only to show how these different patronage systems are located according to their levels of inclusion and contestation. I recognize that this continuum is not a reflection of political reality, since current political systems have different mixes of patronage depending on the amount of resources available, institutional limitations and electoral systems. However, this scale allows observing that parties will always have a mix of patronage goods in their agenda, since the complexity of social demands and party dependency upon labour and financial resources for their survival, makes it difficult to reach the highest democratic point. In regard to elite circulation, systems that are close to the democratic ideal will be more likely to allow for greater elite circulation, since increasing the level of representation will require more representative and responsive leaders, who really understand the needs of their constituents. This increasing demand for substantial representation is likely to suppress party elites' exclusionist behaviour and to reduce political inequality, as nomination rules have to mould to the needs of the represented-to gain votes-and power is more equitably distributed within the party structure.

3.4. Political Parties, Social Capital and Democracy

After looking at political parties from the views of Putnam, Coleman and Bourdieu, it becomes clear that parties constitute an important source of social capital for

political activity. From the perspective of Putnam, these institutions can be considered sources of social capital as they are able to bring together dispersed social forces and blend them into a single power, whose collective strength allows for the achievement of goals that would be impossible to reach otherwise. Through their processes and norms they teach individuals the relevance of politics and instil in them values that are important for the preservation of democracy. Even when they may not be sources of social trust, they nevertheless assist democracy in the sense that they allow for individuals to work together for their common ideals and they inculcate values of cooperation, tolerance and compromise. For Coleman, these institutions are able to produce useful social capital for society and for their particular members as they engender relations of reciprocity, spread information among public and members, generate the governing elites that conduct society's affairs and through their internal rules guide members in political action. Most important, these institutions further their social capital utility as they become resources for other social forces to express and participate in the political arena Despite the fact that all these views show the more benevolent side of social capital, Bourdieu's viewpoint also shows us how these institutions may generate exclusion and reproduce inequality through their activities. Parties can also work against democracy as they can use their power to monopolize political power and prevent others from bringing their demands to the negotiating table. As these individuals and groups are denied the opportunity to participate in the electoral race and compete for support, they are denied the opportunity to acquire the resources needed for advancing their collective demands and emerging from social stagnation. This is also more likely to happen in situations where the lack of democratic conditions and poorly developed electoral systems do not allow for greater political

involvement from citizens. It is important to state that the presence of democratic conditions does not guarantee that parties will stop generating exclusionary social capital in the form of patronage. Nevertheless, parties will face greater barriers to such behaviour in the presence of these constraints.

In my view parties are capable of producing both useful and harmful capital: parties may limit internal participation in decision-making and still manage to generate good leaders. Parties also may develop patronage relations with select social sectors and still manage to ensure the collective welfare of society. As I explained above, parties move on both spectrums of social capital: they can produce useful by-products (information, leadership, policies) at the same time that they generate exclusion (patronage ties). The final judgement of how good or bad parties are for democracy will be determined by how far or close they are from the democratic point of the spectrum.

Conclusions

In order to conclude this thesis, it seems appropriate to enumerate its objectives and the process that was used to approach them. The purpose was first, to discover whether political parties could produce social capital, and second, to analyze if this social capital was useful for democracy. My theoretical premise held that political parties, as any other civic organization, were able to produce social capital by-products, but the usefulness of these by-products for building democracy ultimately depended on the institutional conditions in which they were located. The procedure to illuminate my hypothesis began with an analysis of the concept of social capital, reviewing materials from the most relevant scholars on the subject: Robert Putnam, James Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu. Secondly, I considered the concepts surrounding democracy and political parties in order to define my object of study as well as the environment in which I would observe it. The next step was to briefly review the current literature on social capital and political parties to assess the position of these political organizations in the social capital debate. Lastly, the analysis focused on political parties from the social capital perspective, and considered how parties in the presence of democratic conditions could, at times, be considered useful resources, but in the absence of such conditions, these social capital by-products could in fact be detrimental for democratic advancement. Below, I provide a brief summary of my analysis, as well as my own views on each of the research points.

The first part of this research focused on social capital, drawing on the most respected scholars in the field in order to clarify the concept. Robert Putnam's works on Italy (1993) and North America (2000) together illustrate the author's perspective on

social capital. For Putnam, social capital is the combination of social factors such as networks, norms, and trusts which are beneficial to society as they facilitate the realization of collective endeavours. Voluntary networks of civic engagement are integral to the production of social capital, as they allow their members to learn norms of civility, as well as to establish relations of cooperation and trust that aid in the planning of collective activity. Most importantly, Putnam suggests that these networks of civic engagement are beneficial in the sense that they instil in citizens the norms of generalized reciprocity, which allow people to collaborate and trust unknown others.

In the pragmatic view of James Coleman (1990), social capital refers to all resources that can be drawn from relationships in a social structure, which can serve the individuals in it to achieve their purposes. Coleman suggests that relationships within a social structure can produce useful resources for individuals by providing them with expectations of reciprocity from others, as well as information, leadership, guidance, and guidelines for collective behaviour. These social structures also produce helpful resources for those outside their boundaries, as the actions generated within the group produce unintentional by-products, which benefit society through unintended benefits and the use of the organizational framework for other social purposes.

Finally, Pierre Bourdieu (1977), who observed social capital from the perspective of society's unequal distribution of resources, sees social capital as all those resources that can be obtained through connection to a valuable network. In contrast to Coleman, who views social capital as resources inherent in any social structure, Bourdieu only considers social capital valuable inasmuch as the networks give individuals access to important social resources, the scarcity of which causes the group to create mechanisms

to restrict their use to its members. Thus, in this case, social capital has a qualitative value that generates behaviours of exclusion and inequality, as the accumulation of these scarce assets by group members limits their availability to outsiders, denying those outside the group the opportunity to use them to improve their social condition.

In my view, social capital can be explained as the social resources that individuals obtain through establishing stable relationships with others. Stability of relationships is key, because there should be a certain degree of recognition and mutual acknowledgement in order for individuals to use each other's resources. Note that I refer only to social resources, which I identify as those explained by Coleman, or in the case of Bourdieu, as social connections that can be translated into economic or symbolic-status-capital. Putnam, however, sees social capital at a macro-level, identifying social capital as the norms for collective action, generalized reciprocity, and trust created through networks of civic engagement. What I find interesting in this section of the analysis is that we can we can locate the visions of these three authors in a progressive continuum which ranges from a private to a public definition. In doing so, Bourdieu is at the private end of the continuum, as the social capital of the group is mainly directed to benefit the private interest of the individuals in it; each individual gains personal profits from belonging and interacting in that social structure, and ultimately they all gain as a group. At the midpoint of the continuum is Coleman's definition, which refers to social structures that bring benefits to the individuals involved in them, but which also produce benefits for those outside the structures, in the form of by-products. Although the resources are meant for those participating in the interaction, these activities may create products or consequences that affect the society in which they are located. Finally at the

public point of the continuum is Putnam, whose view passes over group's particular profit to focus on the benefits that the whole network may bring to society (public goods). Putnam sees networks as structures that instruct norms for social activity and generalized reciprocity to their members, which subsequently transform into social capital for society as these norms facilitate planning and cooperation for the realization of collective tasks. Thus, in this continuum, which defines how, social capital resources are distributed, we move from a private-level-Bourdieu, to a public-level-Putnam. However, social capital is not a resource that the individual can obtain on his or her own. Because social capital is created through interaction, the individual will always rely on the cooperation of others to produce it. I believe that social capital is obtained through networks that allow individuals to establish stable relationships with others. These stable relationships are social capital resources as they allow for those in the relationship to share their assets for the pursuit of personal or collective benefits.

Though the concept of social capital addresses benefits for those engaged in social relations, these benefits do not automatically help society. Even when the benefits at the individual level are guaranteed, in the sense that individuals join forces to achieve a common goal, the translation to broader social gain depends on other factors. Contrary to Putnam, I believe that the environment is important, as it is these external conditions that provide people with the basic level of security required to trust and work with others. It is for this reason that, in the next section, I discuss democracy before approaching the concept of political parties. It is my view that parties functioning in a democratic environment are more likely to produce social capital by-products that come closer to Putnam's public side of the spectrum.

As I explored the concept of democracy, I found that its application is very different from the idea expressed in its name. Being the *rule of the people*-demos, democracy refers to people's participation in decisions that affect their society and well-being. However, due to constraints of space and time, this power of the demos is reduced to the ability to decide those who will govern for them. To look at this concept in more detail, I referred to the works of Robert Dahl (1971), Seymour Lipset and Jason Lakin (2004), who provide a comprehensive view of how democracy is supposed to operate. According to Dahl, democracy is a system where governors are responsive to the governed. Subsequently, he exposes a series of conditions that are essential for this outcome to occur. The purpose of the conditions is mainly to provide individuals with the freedom and the means to express their opinion, and to guarantee that such opinions are equally weighted for decision-making. Dahl's most valuable contribution to this exploration of democracy is his idea of polyarchies, which he uses to refer to systems that are imperfect versions of the democratic ideal. He then creates a democratic continuum to evaluate these polyarchies, which ranges from hegemony to full democracy. In this continuum governments ascend from closed hegemony to democracy as they implement the conditions that allow for inclusiveness and contestation. Lipset and Lakin's content that democracy mainly refers to the rights to individuals to elect their governors through free and fair elections. Lipset and Lakin assume that for elections to be free and fair they must occur in conditions of inclusiveness and contestation. The authors state that their concept does not include rights and freedoms as they consider that the presence of such conditions does not guarantee the inclusiveness and competitiveness of elections. In this

sense, the scholars rather look at the overall levels of inclusiveness and competition of the political system that the presence of certain political rights.

After defining democracy, the next step was to define political parties, which are the mechanisms through which people perform the democratic activity. In this section I decided to define parties on the basis of their functions, a measure that I considered more useful as it allowed me to evaluate their political activity in terms of social capital by-products. According to the literature, political parties perform an important function in democracy as they facilitate political participation. They are the main channels of communication between the state and the public and among the public itself; they produce the alternatives – that is, candidates – for election; and most importantly, they act as mediators between different social interests amalgamating their opposing views and demands into a coherent program which is then offered as a political option –the syncretic function. Briefly, the relevance of parties to democracy lies in the fact they allow people to exert their democratic right to choose their government, by giving them the means, namely the choices –candidates and policy programs– from which to choose.

However, some scholars contend that political parties, even when they are civic networks, are not representative sources of social capital for democracy, since their activity is mainly oriented to control political power and not to promote its democratic exercise. Robert Putnam suggests that political activity has been declining over the last years as a result of parties' increasing professionalization and their dependence on financial resources, replacing social capital (active membership) with financial capital (contributions). While Putnam believes that political parties are declining in their production of social capital, Eric Uslaner does not even conceive such organizations as

producers of social capital, since the goal of winning elections prevails over other democracy-enhancing activities. Uslaner explains that parties are not likely to produce social capital for democratic development since they are not interested in including other participants in decision-making. They do not promote any other civic activity beyond electoral participation, since increased civil participation may endanger their capacity to create comprehensive platforms. Finally, he also suggests that parties do not generate social trust, since the whole purpose of joining a party is to share views with similarly-minded individuals.

My third chapter assessed the validity of these arguments. In order to do so, I considered parties from the different social capital views to assess whether they could produce social capital, and if it was useful for society. Beginning with Putnam's view of social capital, my conclusion was that parties are indeed sources of social capital as these civic-political networks help society to coordinate collective activity, through their norms and internal procedures. Throughout the chapter I argued that parties coordinate political activity at the local level; as they allow for people to join their forces to pursue common purposes and ideas; and at the national level, as they create platforms and campaigns that allow for people to assess the different political plans of government in order to make their choice. These institutions are also democratically useful as they promote norms and values that are important for political activity through their processes of interest aggregation and articulation, and leadership recruitment. Countering Putnam's view, I contend that parties produce social capital as they allow citizens to interact with each other even when these interactions are not at the direct, face-to-face level. By becoming a member of the group, even if it is only a nominal participation (fee members), these

institutions allow individuals to feel that their contribution helps to make a difference. Furthermore, I also suggested that parties enhance democracy, as political platforms require compromise and cooperation. Despite the fact that party platforms may not satisfy all their members, they collaborate with others in supporting such platforms because they understand that, even if not all their demands are met, said proposals address their main priorities. Finally, I consider that another useful lesson of observed party activity is the prevalence of the public good over particular interests. Even though parties may compete based on particular interests, once they gain power, these interests must accommodate to the needs of society, as their democratic legitimacy requires them to govern and provide welfare for the entire population.

From the viewpoint of Coleman, I found that, as social structures, parties not only produced social capital resources useful for their members, but that their role in society compels them to create by-products, namely, political activity. Parties produce useful social by-products as they create obligations of reciprocity through their platforms, spread useful information within and outside their boundaries, generate political leaders and political elites and most importantly, teach citizens how to perform political actions through their norms and rules. These political organizations fulfill Coleman's view of social capital at the particular and social level, as within their structure they allow individuals to acquire the resources needed to accomplish their personal and collective goals. Moreover, through doing this they can also benefit society in general, as their activity is mainly intended to deliver a public good, which is to coordinate the political activity and produce the leaders that have the capacities to lead society to achieve their collective goals. Most important is the fact that parties are not only a source of social

capital, but also a resource. As they expand their membership to include different social sectors, they lend their voice and structure to these groups, allowing them to benefit from their social capital-connections, information and representation.

Up to this point and through every section I have pointed out the importance of democratic conditions. The presence of institutions, such as the state and constitutions, are essential for democracy as they allow for people to speak their views and demands and ensure that political activity is oriented toward the achievement of the collective good. Moreover, electoral laws that encourage representation and responsiveness are important to democratic activity, as they become an incentive for government to commit to their electoral promises, and motivate citizens to participate since they see their vote as meaningful. Another integral ingredient is civil society, which enhances democracy, as it constitutes alternative sources of information besides parties, calling attention to political and non-political issues that are also important for social development. In my view, civil society is important because it offers an alternative for expression and social activity. These civic forces act as a counterbalance to the power of the state, as they exert pressure in government and give citizens resources to push more specific issues that cannot be properly addressed under the inclusive umbrella of parties. Finally, the presence of an efficient bureaucracy is essential for democratic exercise as it instils trust in the state, by assuring citizens the impartiality of state institutions when dealing with their particular grievances, regardless of their political bent.

The combination of these institutions should generate a democratic environment that stimulates parties to generate useful social capital. However, as Lipset and Lakin observed, the presence of such mechanisms does not guarantee that parties will

necessarily act to enhance conditions of inclusiveness and competition. Given this, Bourdieu's definition of social capital is helpful in exploring how party activity can also generate social capital resources that are harmful for democracy and society. Different to what is commonly thought, parties' elites are useful for democracy in the sense that they are the people with the vision and the commitment to preserve these political entities and to organize their collective endeavours, one of the most important being the recruitment and selection of political leaders. However, this process, even when it is one of the most essential of all party activity, can also become a source of harmful social capital as it may help to reproduce relations of inequality and exclusion by depriving others the opportunity to compete in the electoral process. There is an established criterion for selecting potential nominees as specified in the electoral laws, and there is also the party criterion, which tends to benefit those with most of social resources in the sense that they have the means to obtain the requirements established in the criteria. However, when non-elites with the knowledge and capabilities to perform are denied the chance to compete, it creates a negative social capital by-product in the form of an exclusionary process of selection. Elites are always likely to select people who are not only capable of assuming leadership tasks but also whose skills and assets enhance party value. However, as this process becomes more accessible to others within the party, this situation is likely to produce a balance between the goals of the elites and the objectives of the general population. Party practices of patronage and clientelism also may contribute negatively to democracy in so far as they privilege the demands of particular clients over those of the collective. The most beneficial kind of clientelism is that of parties with their electorates. However, history shows that parties will always adapt their patronage mechanism to

accommodate new circumstances, and use their power to privilege some over others, in that sense helping to reproduce social inequality

It thus appears that even within democratic conditions parties can create non-useful social capital for democracy, as their patronage relations exclude those who do not belong to the 'clientele'. However, I believe it is important to take a comprehensive view of the potential of these institutions to create social capital, and recognize both their positive and negative aspects. Parties are able to produce both useful and harmful social capital at the same time, and the only way to determine whether they constitute an advantage or a hindrance to democracy will be to weigh their overall activity and contrast the value of their contribution. I also conclude that it is more likely for parties to produce useful social capital in an environment where democratic conditions are effectively in place, as they act as a constraint against the power of the governing and the party elites. Thus parties, as civic political networks, produce social capital in the sense that they encourage individuals to interact with each other (political action), even if at distance, to generate a specific outcome that will benefit them and all society in general. However, how far these benefits spread through society will ultimately depend on the amount of resources at their disposal, the presence of institutional constraints and on their internal power configuration.

To end, it is important to briefly readdress Uslaner's view about parties' inability to produce social capital for democracy. Although I consider the author's critiques useful for the study of political parties' activity and contribution to society, it is my belief that parties constitute sources of social capital for democracy, in spite of their own nature. Even when parties attempt to drive away external forces for decision-making, elections

bind parties to people and thus to their opinions and needs. Parties must engage in interactions with civil society and the citizenry in order to find out their issues and win their favour, even if it is for the sole purpose of winning and retaining power. They are then forced to consider these issues when setting their platforms and decide among them, which should be addressed in order to secure future votes. Finally, in spite of the fact that parties do generate particularized trust among their members, I contend that parties per se are not able to produce generalized trust. This trust is created through the state and its branches, through laws and democratic institutions (elections, rights and freedoms) that encourage people to cooperate with others in the realization of common endeavours, which in this case will be the prosperity and development of society in democracy and peace.

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